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THE KARAMANLI



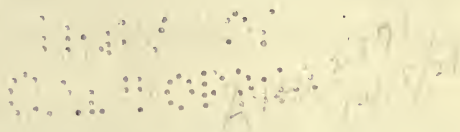
INTERIOR OF THE GRAND MOSQUE OF THE KARAMANLI.

THE NEW TRIPOLI

AND WHAT I SAW IN
THE HINTERLAND

By ETHEL BRAUN

WITH 58 ILLUSTRATIONS



T. FISHER UNWIN
LONDON: ADELPHI TERRACE
LEIPSIC: INSELSTRASSE 20

IT 220
B8

First Published in 1914

THE
PUBLISHERS

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PREFACE

IN writing this book on Tripoli I have been immensely helped by the great courtesy and kindness shown me there, and I take the opportunity here of expressing my gratitude to all those who, in one way or another, have been of assistance to me in my work.

To H.E. the Governor of Tripolitania, General Garioni, for opening up the way to me; to his Private Secretary, Cav. Astuto di Lucchesi, and to the heads of the Public Works Department and the Municipality; to Mrs. Zolia, an Englishwoman who has lived in Tripoli for twenty-one years, I am deeply indebted for much valuable assistance.

I should like also to take the opportunity of thanking Captain Fasulo, Resident of the Menscia; Lieutenant Citarella, Resident of Zanzur, and Captain Gentilucci, Resident of Azizia, to all of whom I am most grateful for many beautiful photographs reproduced in this book.

I am much indebted to the Residents of Gharian and Yeffren, Captain Count Testi Rasponi and

Captain Vallesi; to Professor Aurigemma, the head of the Archæological Department; and Professor Onorato, Director of the Hospital.

Many of the photos of Tripoli are by Silla Miliani.

E. B.

January 9, 1914.

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**FIRST
IMPRESSIONS**

CHAPTER I

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

On board the *Memfi*—First impressions—Market Place—British Consulate—Visit to Arab house—Shara Azizia.

A CLOUDLESS sky—the Mediterranean a blue lake. Although already well into October, the sun blazing like the sun of August, and at 2 p.m. our first sight of Tripolitania from the deck of the *Memfi*. But this is not yet Tripoli—the long line of mountains, very faint in the distant haze, is Homs. Another hour and the coast of Tripoli is in sight. As the *Memfi* turns into the channel and the pilot's boat comes alongside, we get the full view of Tripoli—a wonderfully strong and picturesque silhouette against the light quivering with heat. There in the middle see the severe lines of the Castle of the Vali, the ancient home of the Governor of Tripoli, on the right the fort with its reddish walls. Here and there a graceful minaret or a rounded marabout breaks the line of roofs; at the back of all the fringe of palm-trees stands

out with feathery distinctness. All combine to make a picture of rare beauty and interest. Away to the left, outside the old town, a little group of new white villas catches the eye, the first sign of the new civilization which is to be grafted on to the old life.

But here we are, actually arrived. The *Memfi* is at anchor; all the excitement and noise of landing is upon us. The heat is intense, abnormal for the time of the year, and it seems, oh! so long before we and our numerous boxes and bags are settled in the small boat bobbing uncomfortably up and down. The two Arab boatmen have much to say to each other and to all and sundry within hearing, but at last we bob off to the landing-stage. The harbour is not deep enough to admit of the entrance of any large steamer, but the work of enlargement is to be undertaken shortly.

Immediately upon landing the Customs claim us, but having nothing to declare, we are passed through without difficulty. Conducted by our future host, who had come to meet us, we start towards the hotel which is to be our home for the next two or three months. Such a babel of noise! such a crowd!—on foot, on donkeys, in carriages; Europeans and Arabs jostling one another. Mules laden with merchandise, Arabs carrying sacks, donkeys all over the place, and

the familiar cry of "*Balek! Balek!*" on every side—the polite manner in the East of telling one to get out of the way. The more forcible expression, "*Bara! Bara!*" one hears less often in Tripoli than elsewhere—at least, that is what struck us at once.

But we thread our way through the maze, on foot; as the distance is so short it is not worth while to have a carriage; *en route* we pass the beautiful old Roman arch of Marcus Aurelius, which the Italians are restoring, after having cleared out the Arab merchants who had taken up their abode there, using it as an Arab café. The domed roof is supported by four arched pillars, forming a square, while the remains of wonderful reliefs are to be seen on each pillar, under the Corinthian capitals, a winged Victory among others being remarkably well preserved. The old foundations are visible some ten feet below the level of the street.

We turn sharp to the left, and *what* a vivid street this is! Narrow and arched, the walls and arches of a strong rose red, changing half-way down to a pale sky blue. Lined all along with fruit-shops—fruit of every colour, orange, scarlet, green—and fruit-sellers with clothes as varied in colour as the contents of their stalls. For strength of colour and vitality of movement Tripoli strikes the new-comer, used as he may

be to these features of the East, very forcibly indeed.

Another hundred yards or so and we are "at home." With joy I find that from my bedroom window I look out on to arches and walls of that same deep rose red which met our eyes on the way up from the harbour.

A rest and some dinner—then we take one of the carriages for hire in the square close by and drive off to the Market Place. There, although it is now evening, all is still movement and animation. First the Souk el Hobza, or bread-market—long lines of stalls, covered with round, flat cakes of bread. Crowds of Arabs, here in Tripoli, generally wearing white fezzes instead of the well-known red. Women shrouded in their white coverings, called here *baracana*,¹ the face entirely hidden, save for one mysterious and expressive eye. Bedouin women too in their picturesque red rags—moving endlessly to and fro from the bread-stalls to the vegetable merchants, buying the evening meal.

Then we pass the Arab cafés, the stillness of the groups seated outside contrasting strongly with the ever-shifting crowd around. The sound of a phonograph from one of them would be a jarring note were it not for the fact that it is the long-drawn cadence of an Arab song.

¹ Anglicized "barracan."



GENERAL VIEW OF TRIPOLI.



THE BREAD-MARKET.

Here is the enclosure for the camels—gathered in groups with their drivers; here and there the gleam of a fire—all settled down for the night, out in the open.

Overhead is the great full moon—behind us the orange and crimson glow of the departed sun, lighting up the walls of the old castle and pouring its glorious sheen over all. Thus the Market Place of Tripoli as we saw it for the first time; the centre of the life of the place—virile, vivid, and strongly impressive.

Back again the next morning to have another look at the Market Place in the strong light of the blazing sun. It appears fairly vast to us as it is, but it was formerly much longer, extending down to the Harbour. A portion has since been cut off for building purposes. The cakes of bread in the daylight are of a brilliant lemon-yellow colour, and verily there seems enough of it to feed an army! The noise and movement of the evening are ten times greater this morning—making it difficult to find a clear space for photoing. Immense interest in my proceedings with the camera is shown by all, for Tripolitans are the least *blasé* of human beings. One negro with a vast smile seems to think that the camera was intended solely for the reproduction of his beauty. Turn which way I will, his face beams upon me, and he

is hopelessly offended when I remorselessly "*balek*" him. Beyond the bread-market, up against the wall, is the Negro Corner, a superior class, selling perfumes, beads, etc. We stop to buy an egg, about the size of a blackbird's, made of bone, into which the merchant puts a paste of musk powder mixed with a few drops of jasmine scent. He would like me to buy a whole necklace of them, but I find one enough—the scent is strong. We see the market for camels of all sizes and ages ; close by another lot of Arabs selling cows (rather miserable specimens), bullocks, calves, sheep, and goats. A most calm and placid scene, till suddenly two men, an Arab and a negro, who are bargaining over a very small bullock, fly at each other and commence a violent pummeling match. It is like a sudden squall on a quiet sea. The noise becomes deafening as all the onlookers take sides, shouting at one another until an Italian, a big, burly man, steps in and separates the combatants. A moment later the two are discussing the bullock once more in the most friendly fashion.

The rows of vegetable and fruit huts (!) are full of colour. This is the negresses' department, and they make a wonderfully effective background to their scarlet pimenti, orange, and green melons, golden dates, and purple onions.

Up and down between the rows of stalls walks

the water-seller, with his green tin basket full of little coloured cups, and his great green tin can, calling "*Ach lib! Ach lib!*"

Close by is the negro pottery-vendor. The pots are all grey in colour, looking for all the world like a great heap of broken shards. The negro's face is just the same shape, possibly from constant proximity. The wood-sellers have their heaps of broken sticks and date-stems just opposite the Shara Bab el Jedid, which is given up to the smiths. Right at the end is one of the old Arab wells, not used now, with its two great brick pillars shaped like ears.

There is a separate market, a large square, surrounded by walls, with three entrances, for the alfa, or sparto (*Stipa tenacissima* of the botanists), which was one of the great products of the country, but since the war the Arabs have ceased to bring it into Tripoli for sale. It grows, in little grey bushes, on the confines of the desert. The *poor* Arabs sometimes use it as fodder for their camels, but are obliged to give the animals saltish water every three or four days to counteract the bad effects of the alfa.

The fish-market, close to the harbour, is quite modern, having been recently constructed by the Italians. There was more noise here than in all the other markets put together.

Many of the fishermen are Maltese. One of

them brought in an immense dogfish for sale while we were there, and in less than two minutes it was all cut up and sold.

All this time the great black clouds had been gathering, then the first heavy drops of rain fell, and we had just time to reach home before the storm burst. It was the first rain in Tripoli for five months. The wave of abnormal heat, which lasted from the 1st to the 17th of September, when the *ghibli*, or hot wind, blew continuously, 104° in the shade, had parched the land, and the storm brought new life.

Since the occupation the Italians have renamed all the streets, or rather have given names to streets which under the Turks had no official names. Thus "the Street of the British Consulate," as it was formerly known, is now the Shara Espagnol. Our representative has his quarters in an imposing old Arab palace, with a very fine open courtyard, many large and lofty rooms, and a commanding terrace. Mufta, the cavass, has been for forty years in the service of the British Consulate, succeeding his father, who held the same position for over fifty years, before the Turkish occupation of Tripoli, under the ancient dynasty of the Karamanli. A fine type is Mufta, tall and broad-shouldered, and he received us with true Arab courtesy and hos-

pitality when we went to visit him at his home the following day. There I met his two wives and daughter-in-law. We all evinced much interest in one another's jewellery, and in the daughter's room I was shown all the embroidery done by herself. For two years before her marriage she worked away at cushions, boxes, and covers, all beautifully embroidered in silks and silver. She is only eighteen, and has been married six months, but does no embroidery now. Evidently that is a frivolity to be laid aside after matrimony.

The whole house, corridor, and courtyard were spotlessly clean, and when I admiringly remarked on this, Mufta said, "Yes, we are clean because we have been always with the English, and we like it."

The pretty little daughter-in-law gave me a charming souvenir of my visit in the shape of an embroidered box, and after some delicious Turkish coffee we passed out into the quiet narrow Arab streets, where all is old and mysterious, down into the main thoroughfare of Tripoli, the Shara Azizia, with its fine buildings, excellent cafés, cosmopolitan crowds, and *electric lighting*. A modern boon this last, conferred on the whole town by the Italians. Under the Turkish *régime* if one wanted to walk out after dark one had to carry one's

own lamp! There was absolutely no system of lighting the streets. Thus our first impressions pass through the whole gamut, from old to new, in this town so full of interest and charm.

**THROUGH
THE
SUKS**

CHAPTER II

THROUGH THE SUKS

A stroll through the Suks—Suk-el-Turk—Suk-el-Herrir—Suk-el-roba—Silversmiths—Leather-workers—Sunset from the minaret of the Grand Mosque.

THE Suks of Tripoli are neither as numerous nor as interesting as those of Tunis, but they have their own character. Since the Italian occupation this character has changed here and there. As I mentioned before, a large slice of the big Market Place having been cut off, what was formerly the busiest of all the Suks, Suk-el-Tlat, is now a modern street with hotels, cafés, and shops. In its present state it is not half as interesting as it must have been in the old days, with the crowding busy sellers—Arabs, Berbers, Greeks, Jews, Italians, Maltese—for it was here that the population bought their week's provisions every Tuesday. Now this same market takes place every Friday at Suk-el-Djemma, about an hour's drive from the town, on the way to Tajura.

The Suk-el-Turk is a long, straight, narrow

street covered with a kind of pergola. The light filters through the leafy trelliswork which tempers the heat of the sun most pleasantly, forming a very effective setting to the human kaleidoscope moving endlessly to and fro. This Suk used to be full of shops kept by the Levantines; now the merchants are Italians, Greeks, and Spaniards. Here you can buy pretty well everything you want, all quite up to date. Half-way down is the new Italian Theatre, which seats about 1,000 and is very well patronized. It used to be a Turkish café concert, with dancers and Arabic musicians, so it has just moved on with the times.

But a beautiful mosque is also in the Suk-el-Turk, looking with true Oriental reserve upon all this modernity at its very door. Such an exquisite door too, of richly carved, stained, or painted wood, with marble supports, opening into an arched courtyard—so still and dignified in the very centre of the hurrying crowd.

On the left of the Suk we pass several little streets leading out to the Bastions. Then we come to the Suk-el-Herrir—the street of the silk-weavers, who have entire possession of it. It is interesting to visit from door to door. The first to receive us is an old man, who, with beaming countenance, invites us to step inside. He and a younger man are busy at work on a web of marvellous fineness and beauty. The foundation

is of silver tissue, into which they will weave a silk of golden colour. When finished it will be a wonderful under-robe for a rich Arab lady of family, costing between £10 and £12.

In the next shop the weaver, picturesque in his crimson coat and scarlet fez, is far advanced on a gorgeous blue pattern, while yet a third has a scheme of royal purple with hem of silver hues. Another is of pure gold, which positively dazzles the eyes with the sun's rays shining full upon it. You can buy pure silk here, sold by weight instead of by the yard, which *never* wears out!

Right at the end of Suk-el-Turk is what was known under the Turks by the name of Suk-el-Gemel. The Italians have renamed it Suk-el-roba. This is a very old, covered Suk—in fact, practically the only one that in this respect resembles the Suks of Tunis. On each side are the same little booths in which the merchants (all Arabs here) sit or lie, smoking, drinking coffee, talking. It is to be presumed they do sell something sometimes, though apparently that is the last thing that interests them. Certainly it is a joy in Tripoli to be able to wander up and down without being pestered to buy, as elsewhere in the East.

Here are carpets, rugs, curtains, bed-covers, mats, and stuffs of all kinds. The arched roof is very high, having small openings at the top,

through which the sun casts patches of light in unexpected places. All is quiet and dignified, most refreshing and characteristic.

Passing out of the Suk-el-Turk to the left, down Suk-el-Museir, we turn to the right. A strong whiff of scent greets us, the soft, warm wind blowing straight off the stalls in the Suk-el-Hattara, where all kinds of Eastern perfumes and drugs are to be found. A little farther on is the Suk-el-Saiaga, the street of the silversmiths. They are all Jews, wonderful craftsmen, working with the finest and most intricate art on gold and silver. Here are all the fantastic and bizarre ornaments which appeal so strongly to the Oriental taste: heavy bracelets, earrings, silver and gold rings with square carved centres, and amulets of silver in the shape of crescents or stars, with a small hole by which to hang them on the front of the corsage. We stop and have an interesting argument with one of the merchants as to the value of a couple of these Arab women's ornaments. His ideas and mine take some time to coincide on the subject, but at last a bargain is struck, needless to say at about half the sum first mentioned. A group of Arabs, quite as keen as we are to see fair play, join in the performance, taking alternate sides—and I finish by photoing the lot.

Next we wander down the Suk-el-Halga, where



LEATHER-WORKERS IN SHARA RICCARDO.

they sell wool in every stage of its existence. The Arab women come here in the early mornings to buy the wool, out of which they make their *barracans*. It is a picturesque Suk, with its pergola half-way down the street, covered with climbing green plants. Here and there one sees a little open courtyard full of skeins of wool hanging out to dry. On the right we pass a marabout, its dome and walls glaringly white in the blazing sun. A little farther to the left leads out into the bread-market, crossing which we come straight into the Shara Riccardo, where the leather-workers have their shops. There is a short row of these along the pillared arcade. The bright yellow shoes so familiar in Tunis are conspicuous by their absence. I saw only a few pairs, and those of a much darker shade, embroidered in various colours. There were dainty little pairs of Arab ladies' shoes, crimson, purple, and blue, embroidered in silver, also some few bags, black or crimson, but most of the shops are devoted to Arabic saddlery of every description for the gay caparisoning of their horses. Red is the predominating colour, making the interior of these workshops very cheery. We were shown a handsome black saddle embroidered in silver, all handworked of course. A pair of scarlet leather high boots, destined for an Arab lady and shaped something like a Cavalier's riding

boot, of most pliable leather, exquisitely embroidered, took my fancy.

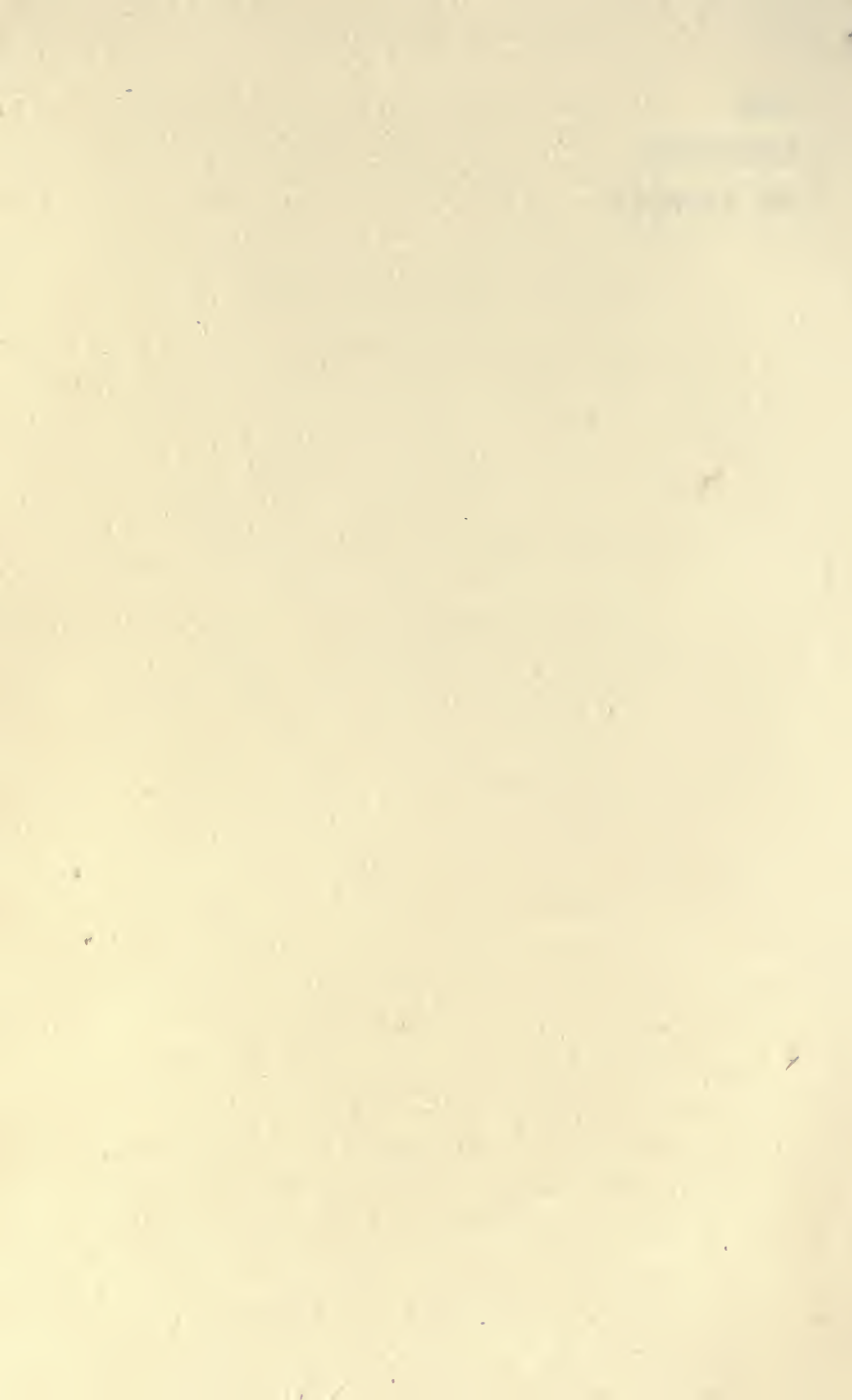
Back again to the big Market Place, up the Shara Misram, we find on the left the artillery quarters, on the right the Civil Hospital. Then turning sharp to the right up the Zenghet Suk-el-Htab, we come to a large open space—the wood and grass market. Here we see the fodder for the camels, donkeys, mules, and other animals of the town being carried on the backs of the first-named beasts. We happen to come at a very busy moment, numbers having just arrived and being unloaded.

The heavy rains of a day or two before have left a huge pond in the middle of the market, which reflects with wonderful effect the long lines of pinkish walls, feathery palm-trees, moving silhouettes of white-robed Arabs and laden camels. As it grows late we turn back to the town, to the entrance of the Grand Mosque of the Karamanli, with Arabs selling white fezzes seated under the arcade. There a friend awaits us with a permit from the Cadi, which allows us to obtain a coveted view of Tripoli from the high balcony surrounding the minaret. The sun is just setting as we emerge after a stiff climb up the corkscrew staircase, setting in a blaze of glory which lends a magic touch to the white-robed city far below. There, between the deep sapphire of the Mediterranean on the one

side and the flaming crimson and gold of the sunset on the other, lies Tripoli, white minarets, marabouts, towers, and roofs touched to a warm life in the departing glow.

As entranced, speechless, we stand drinking in this wonderful panorama, a long-drawn, quavering cry comes from the balcony close by my side. It is the Muezzin calling the evening prayer so familiar to all who know the East—but how marvellous the effect, here on the very spot with him as he calls across the space! Back comes the cry from a neighbouring mosque—and yet again—a little farther off this time, "*Allah il Allah! Mohamed rhazul il Allah.*" With one last long look we turn down the winding stairway back from the city of dreams to the busy life below.

**THE
MOSQUES
OF TRIPOLI**



CHAPTER III

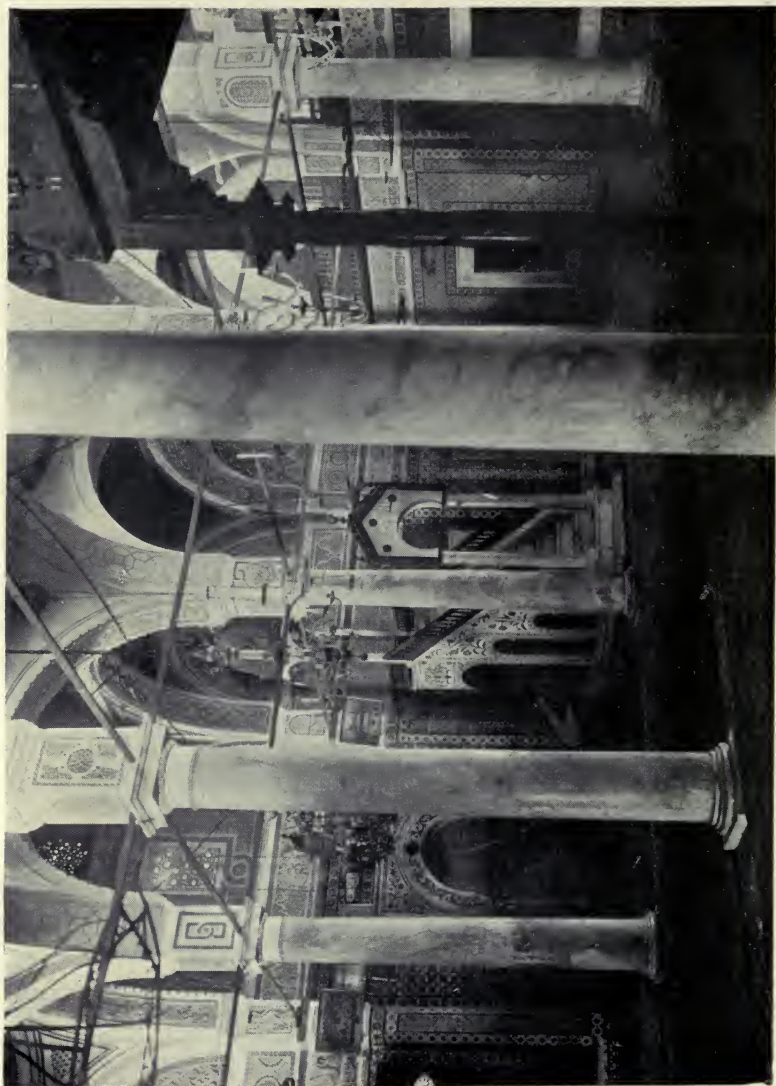
THE MOSQUES OF TRIPOLI

Visit to the Cadi—The Mosque of Gurgi—The Mehrab of the Imam—Tombs of the Gurgi family—The Muezzin—The washing-place—The Seal of Solomon—The Mosque of the Camel—Grand Mosque of the Karamanli—Women's galleries—Tombs of the Karamanli—The Mosque of Dragut.

IN the Suk-el-Turk, about half-way down on the right-hand side, is a fine old carved marble doorway. Through this door we pass to visit the Cadi, who is head of all things to do with the Mussulman religion in Tripoli. Up a short stone staircase we come into a fairly large square ante-room, with arched roof, while opposite we can see other smaller waiting-rooms in which groups of Arabs sit or stand, engaged in animated conversation. All have come to discuss their business or matrimonial affairs with the Cadi. We go through the carved doorway to the right with blue faience tiles into a long, narrow room. From his seat at a business-like table there rises to greet us a spare old man whose shrewd, kindly eyes light up in friendly welcome as we shake hands with him.

On a couch close to his table sit three Arab sheikhs, with all of whom we shake hands. Such fine types these, having inborn courtesy and charm of manner, for the Arab is always a gentleman. There being several more in the room waiting their turn, besides the others outside, we see that the Cadi is very busy, so, in spite of his repeated invitations to stay, we make our excuses and take our departure with many more handshakes and compliments. Our time as well as his is portioned out this morning.

This call on the Cadi is a sort of preliminary to a series of visits to the mosques of Tripoli, which, like those of Tunis, are not open to the passer-by. One can only enter with a permit from the Cadi, or with some official. But we have no difficulty as we are with the Cav. Smirli, interpreter attached to the Italian Tribunal, who acts as an Open Sesame for us. There are thirty-two mosques altogether, large and small, the most interesting being the Gurgi Mosque and the Grand Mosque of the Karamanli. Armed with cameras we start off, first to see the Gurgi, the richest and most elaborately ornate of all. This was constructed in 1809, during the Karamanli Dynasty. It is near the Customs House, close to the Arch of Marcus Aurelius, and is the pride of the Mussulmans of Tripoli. The legend runs that when all was finished, the mosque standing complete in its beauty, the luckless archi-



INTERIOR OF THE GURGI MOSQUE.

fect was conducted by his wealthy patrons to the top of the minaret and thrown down to prevent him from ever building such another. But this should be taken with a pinch of salt, like most of the other legends here.

Mustapha Gurgi, a very rich citizen of Tripoli, was the founder. He married the daughter of Yussuf Karamanli, the last Pacha of the family, and his descendants are buried in this mosque. We are struck by the beauty of the façades. As we pass through the outer door into the long passage running round two sides of the building a handsome portal faces us of white marble with inlaid coloured marbles in Florentine style. The walls are entirely covered with faience tiles, blue, green, yellow, and white patterns, while two other entrances on the right-hand side, also of inlaid marble, are as fine as the first. After slipping our feet, as is customary, into the loose slippers lying ready for our use, we enter. The richness and variety of the decoration fairly bewilder one for a moment. On every side are inlaid marbles, carved stained wood, delicate pierced stucco-work, coloured glass, many-hued faience. The *mimbar*, or pulpit, all of marble, inlaid in the same style as the doors with coloured conventional pattern, has twelve steps. Two slender pillars, surmounted by a gilded arch, form the entrance. The *Mehrab*, where the Imam

leads the prayers of the Faithful, facing towards Mecca, to the left of the pulpit, is of faience and marble. There are nine white marble pillars, and there is not an inch of the walls uncovered by faience or delicate stucco. This latter work is rare in Tripoli, though very common in Tunis. In fact, it was a Tunisian stucco-worker who did all this latter decoration in the Gurgi Mosque, coming specially from Tunis for the purpose. But we notice that much of the white stucco is painted, a thing which I do not remember having seen elsewhere. To the west is a large gallery of carved painted wood, where the Muezzin remains during the service, intoning the responses, leading the congregation. In one corner of the mosque there is a small wooden sort of reading-desk. Here, once a year only, the Imam, at the festival of the birth of the Prophet, reads the special book which relates to this event.

We climb up into the long gallery running round three sides of the mosque, where, in the time of Turkish rule, the women had their places behind screens, through which they could see but not be seen. These have been done away with now, as young Arab women never go to the mosques; only the very old ones occasionally put in an appearance. Right in the centre of the gallery, with its handsome ceiling of painted wood, is the large square place where the Muezzin sits as I have mentioned.

He has a good deal of work one way and another, for besides the services in the mosque, he has to call the prayer from the minaret five times a day: one hour and a half before sunrise, at midday, at half-past three, at sunset, and, for the last time, one hour and a half after sunset. At each of these calls of prayer he is bound by the law of the Prophet to make a certain number of genuflexions, two, three, or four, as the case may be, but if he is so inclined he may increase the number; that depends upon his own feelings.

We visit the tombs of the Gurgi family, that of Mustapha, the founder, with its tall headstone engraved with gilt characters, surmounted by a red stone fez—that of his son Haj Ali, next to him, and many others. They are in an open vault just at the side of the mosque, to the right of the pulpit, and can also be seen through a grating from the interior of the mosque.

There are little scooped out cups on the lids of the tombs to serve as water-holders for the birds; a common Arab custom this, and a very poetic one, I think. Walther von der Vogelweid, the celebrated German troubadour of the Middle Ages, in one of his poems, asks to have the same little cups cut into his gravestone, so that he may still hear the song of the birds he loved so well—a curious coincidence. Engraved on the sides of some of the tombs is the Seal of Solomon, to keep away evil

spirits. This Chapel for the Tombs has a lovely domed roof of coloured stucco, perforated like lace-work.

There is another little courtyard, uncovered save by a pergola of climbing green leaves, where all the tombs are those of the women of the family. Through a narrow passage to yet another paved courtyard, out of which open the doors of fifteen rooms for students. Here they study for their religion, to sing the Koran, or to help in various ways in the service of the Mosques.

Now we pass the Mahal-el-Oudon, or washplace for the faithful before they enter the mosque. Of the four rites in the Mussulman religion, only two (*a*) the Hanefita, (*b*) the Malechita, are followed in Tripoli. The Gurgi belongs to the former. In the mosques belonging to this rite the water with which the Arabs make their ablutions must be untouched by any other person, therefore here is a long row of taps above the stone trough. On pressing one a jet of water springs forth, with which each intending worshipper washes himself according to the law of the Prophet, three times in succession, the mouth, the nose, the face, the hands and arms up to the elbow, and the feet *until clean*. The washing-place is close to the exit, and we pass out of the beautiful Gurgi mosque, from its cool portico into the glare and noise of the street—another world it seems.



INTERIOR OF THE MOSQUE OF THE CAMEL.

The Mosque of the Camel, which we next visit, also has its legend. They say that the camel of Omar-el-Htab (father of one of the wives of the Prophet Mohammed, and the then conqueror of this oft-conquered land of Tripoli) stopped here when he came in the year 700, and the mosque was built to commemorate the fact. It is the oldest in Tripoli, and a great contrast to the Gurgi—very simple, with thirty-six pillars, the centre one a beautiful Corinthian column. The arches are Roman in style, and there are five entrances. There is a fine courtyard where the worshippers pray at night during the summer. In the centre a couple of great palm-trees stand out sharply against the white domes. The minaret is a square tower. This mosque belongs to the rite Malechita, which means that the ablutions may be performed in water which has been touched by another person. The water here flows from a single tap down a little drain, filling a succession of scooped out basins in the trough.

The Grand Mosque of the Karamanli which we reach by an entrance out of the Suk-el-roba, is the largest in Tripoli, and although much less ornate than the Gurgi, appeals more strongly to us. It is so dignified and spacious, much more aristocratic in atmosphere, as indeed becomes the Mosque of the Karamanli Dynasty. It was built in 1726 by Achmed Pacha, of the Karamanli. Its beautiful

doors are of dark carved wood, its columns, sixteen in number, of marble, the *mimbar* of coloured marbles, again reminding one of the Florentine work.

The *mehrab* is very handsome, with two black and white fluted pillars, in front of each of which stands a great bronze candlestick. Here again in the gallery our guide points out to us the places where the Turkish women used to sit, but the lattices which screened them have vanished. Inside the Mosque is the tomb of the founder, while outside, in a large railed-off open vault, are those of Ali Pacha, his son, and many others.

Quite an interested crowd has gathered around us as we stand just inside the entrance looking at the tombs, for it is rare here to see a European woman in a mosque—unlike Kairouan (Tunisia), where it is a common event.

On the way home we pass the Mosque of Dragut, a celebrated general in the sixteenth century. His name is still famous in Tripoli, which he invaded and conquered for the Sultan against the Spaniards. He died in 1564, in Malta, fighting against the knights of Malta, and is buried in this mosque, which bears his name.

The mosques of Tripoli are divided into two classes, *jama*, small; *mesget*, large. The former have no Imam and no *mimbar*, and it is to this class that the greater number belong.

But whether great or small, simple or ornate, the mosque is the *centre*, the *foundation*, the *key* to the Mussulman's life, round which all the activity of his being revolves.

**THE
SEAT OF
GOVERNMENT**



GENERAL GARIONI, GOVERNOR OF TRIPOLITANIA.

CHAPTER IV

THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT

Audience with the Governor—The castle—Review of the troops on the King's birthday—Reception of Arab sheikhs by the Duke of Abruzzi.

TRIPOLITANIA is still under military administration, and the Governor, General Garioni, has intimated that he will give us an audience. As he is not at all easy of access, we are very pleased that he should accord us this favour. It is a blazing hot day, and the rose-pink walls of the old castle glow in the sunshine as we pass out of the Via Azizia up the long slope of the ramparts leading to the entrance.

The General receives us with great courtesy and charm of manner, marked by the frankness and simplicity of a soldier, for that he emphatically is. His work of administration and his profession absorb him entirely, while he has no use for society functions or frivolities. In the course of our conversation this quality comes out strongly. We mention casually how the artistic side of Tripoli

appeals to us, which draws from him the characteristic remark that "for *us* the most important thing just now is the harbour." When I explain to him the object of my visit to Tripoli he expresses his willingness to allow me all facilities, and ringing for his private secretary, places me in his hands for all the information I may require. He then invites us to step out on to the terrace, just outside his room, to see the magnificent view over the harbour, the Mediterranean, and to the right eastwards towards the Tombs of the Karamanli and the oasis. It is in this direction, he explains, that the new town of Tripoli will be built, leaving the old part as it is, untouched. A wonderful site it is too, with special advantages of position and climate, such as should make of Tripoli later on a dangerous rival as a winter resort to Tunis and Algiers.

As we take our leave of the Governor, we speak of the old friendship and sympathy which has always existed between England and Italy, and which is something much deeper than a superficial sentiment—long may it last!

The castle is the most interesting building in the town of Tripoli, representing as it does all the varied phases of existence through which this land of Tripolitania has passed. Some say it was built by the Spaniards in the sixteenth century, but there are traces of a much older

construction in this chaos of buildings—Arabic, French, and Spanish builders have all contributed different portions. Numerous additions were made from time to time during the Karamanli reign, whenever any of the many members of the family required apartments. As no single person of the royal blood, even down to the great-grandchildren of the Pacha, lived outside the walls of the castle, it assumed in time the form of a small town built without sequence or regard to style. The rooms are many and large, but are now entirely modernized and given to the use of the Italian officers. The Turks stripped the place bare at the time of the Italian occupation, but in the big reception-room there is a magnificent old mirror, the only thing of any value they left behind.

The outer wall is of great height and thickness, for in the Middle Ages the castle was an impregnable fort against attacks from sea or land.

The archive-room is an extraordinary sight. Upon entering it we were greeted by the musty smell of ages, which was explained by the fact that we were walking over a floor literally covered with documents and leaves of manuscripts. An enormous stack of them on one side of the room reached to the ceiling. Sacks full were piled ready near the door to be carried away and burnt,

while all round the room were cases crammed full. They were Turkish and Arabic documents of every conceivable description, the accumulation of centuries, which are at last being sorted out by the Italians. As we remarked when we saw the room, it looks like the work of a lifetime, but, as a matter of fact, though no light task, it is proceeding quickly and methodically. Down below, level with the ground, are the prisons, two for men and one for women. In the latter are a few prisoners, Arabs, Bedouins, and Jewesses. The wardress is a stalwart negress, capable of managing a dozen recalcitrants; but force does not appear at all necessary, as every one seemed very contented. The prison is like a large Arab house, many rooms opening out of an immense courtyard. The women do light work, and above all, are obliged to keep themselves and the prison very clean. We saw one of the prisons for men, where there were about two hundred Arabs. It is on the same lines as the women's, and the courtyard was full of men, who came crowding to the door to look at us, much interested in our visit. They were all awaiting trial at the Tribunal for various minor offences, and none had been there very long.

Leaving the labyrinth of passages and doors, mysterious and awe-inspiring in the gathering evening twilight, we climb up the steep slopes



THE CASTLE

of the ramparts to the topmost terrace of the castle, from which there is a grand view over the Mediterranean. There is more than half a gale blowing, while the sea breaks in great clouds of spray over the new harbour works, which stretch out in a long line away to the left. The sight of that line makes one realize more than anything that Tripoli has at last finished with her time of trial, and entered upon a new life of progress and prosperity.

We have just returned from the review of the troops in honour of the King of Italy's birthday. Of course many of the troops have been sent back to Italy, so that the review is on a smaller scale than that which took place in 1912, but there are still some ten thousand stationed in Tripoli and the surrounding districts.

We left early to take up our places on the Tribune opposite Government House, in the Via Azizia, passing *en route* great crowds of "the people," most international crowds — Italians, Maltese, Jews, Arabs, Berbers, negroes, in all the colours of the rainbow, maintained in order by two rows of carabinieri and native soldiers. Terraces and windows on each side of the street were full of folk; gay decorations and bunting in the Italian red, white, and green everywhere lent the city a gay aspect, in the full blaze of the sun,

which even at this early hour (8.30) was uncomfortably hot. Just opposite us, on the balcony of Government House, were assembled some of the members of the Government entourage, and the various foreign Consuls with their families. Exactly at 9 a.m. the Governor, accompanied by his staff and other officers, with Hassouna Pacha on his right, took up his position close to Government House. A guard of honour formed by native sheikhs made a most picturesque background in their white robes and long, flowing crimson cloaks.

The review commenced with the march past of infantry regiments, followed by a detachment of sailors, popular as always, to judge from their reception by the crowd. They were followed by smart carabinieri and more infantry. Then far away down the street we could hear a murmur of applause, growing in volume as it reached us, till we could see from our places the famous Bersaglieri. They passed at the double, their plumes waving in the wind, while the murmur became a roar of applause, in which we joined with hearty clapping of hands and cries of *Evviva li Bersaglieri!*

A very interesting detail of the review was the squadron of automobile cammions, which passed four abreast. These have proved of inestimable value in transport work over the heavy sand.

The field artillery and light mountain batteries came next, followed by the camel corps, carrying sections of field guns. The Ascari, splendid black troops from Eritrea, Italy's Red Sea colony, all in white with their curious tall fezzes, passed with a fine swing. They are untiring runners, and can keep up with cavalry for hours.

The march past of the native troops was especially interesting, the "Tripolini," in white with red cummerbunds, being heartily welcomed by the crowds, and looking a wonderfully well-set-up body of men. The Italians are laying the foundations of a native army here, which will prove to be a valuable asset.

The close of the review was marked by the defile at the gallop of a group of the Arab corps as an act of homage to their sovereign, the King of Italy; and after this the Governor, accompanied by Hassouna Pacha, entered Government House, while the huge crowds melted away in gaily coloured groups to overflow the cafés and discuss, with keen interest, the details of the morning's spectacle.

Here I should like to say a few words about the visit to Tripoli of H.H. the Duke of Abruzzi. For some days the town had been eagerly awaiting his arrival, but the appalling storm, which lasted for a week, prevented the near approach of any vessel. On the evening of the 12th of December the cruiser *Regina Elena*, under the command of his Highness,

appeared off the coast and lay-to at some distance from the new breakwater of the port. On the following morning the Duke held a reception of all the notables of Tripoli and, what was very interesting to see, of a deputation of Arab sheikhs. These saw for the first time a member of the Royal House of Italy, and the expressions upon their faces clearly showed that the fact held an immense interest for them. We English know perhaps better than any other nation how necessary and how important such visits are in their effect on the native mind, and can readily understand that this event must help to raise and consolidate the Italian prestige in Tripoli.

In the afternoon we attended a *thé dansant*, at which the Duke of Abruzzi was present for some time. Here the sheikhs were keenly interested spectators, for the first time in their lives, of European society functions. It was most amusing to watch their faces as they stood in a long, silent, attentive row looking on at the dancing. Undoubtedly they enjoyed the sight, for their eyes never wandered from the dancers, but, like true Orientals, they gave not the smallest sign of astonishment or amusement beyond an occasional flicker of a smile.

For East is East and West is West,
And never the twain shall meet.



THE REVIEW OF THE TROOPS.

**THE FAMILY
OF THE
KARAMANLI**

CHAPTER V

THE FAMILY OF THE KARAMANLI

Interview at the Municipality with Hassouna Pacha, the Mayor of Tripoli—The founder of the Dynasty, Achmet Karamanli—His son Mohamed Pacha—Murder of Ali Bey by his brother Yussuf—Napoleon Bonaparte's Treaty with Yussuf—Yussuf's intrigue against the French Consul—His humiliation by the French fleet—Deposed in 1835—His son Ali deported to Constantinople—Uncle of Hassouna Pacha.

IT is with much interest and some curiosity that we go to-day to be introduced at the Municipio, or Town Hall of Tripoli, to Hassouna Pacha, Mayor of Tripoli, the direct descendant of the Karamanli family. He comes of a race whose history has been turbulent and full of romance, whose independent rule over Tripolitania was remarkable, even in this land of changes and chances, for its vicissitudes.

We are presented to a dignified man, whose whole bearing, strong features, and piercing eyes, full of latent fire, belie his age—for he is over 70. He receives us with the utmost cordiality and courtesy, begging us to be seated. There is nothing particularly interesting about the room,

which is like any other business room. The large table in front of the Mayor is covered with crimson cloth, but the fine crimson and white rug hanging on the wall behind his chair gives an Oriental touch to the otherwise thoroughly European bureau.

Seated around the room are various skeikhs and Arabs of good family who have come to discuss business. We exchange civilities over our Turkish coffee. Every one in the room is immensely interested in our conversation and in us, for it is not often that Englishwomen come to pay visits in this room. Hassouna Pacha tells us about his family, who are in the country just now. He has a little girl about five years old, and another, a baby in arms, the children of his present wife. His sons and daughters by his first wife are all grown men and women. We can see that we are distinctly interrupting the business of the day, although Hassouna Pacha is much too polite to say so. The room being now full of Arabs waiting to speak to him, it is time for us, frivolous callers, to give place to business. So after the exchange of many compliments and handshakes we take our leave. He makes an interesting picture, this dignified descendant of the Karamanli, his clean-cut features standing out sharply against the crimson background, the light from the stained glass window at the end of the room falling on his face as he bids us a friendly



MOUNTED ARAB SHEIKHS.

but stately farewell. As we pass out we shake hands with one or two of the interested beholders, and depart amid a shower of "*Beslemma*" ("Health to you").

The rule of the independent Beys of Karamanli over Tripolitania commenced in 1724, when an Arab chief, Achmet Karamanli, commander of a cavalry regiment, took possession of the country after massacring the Turkish garrison. He was an astute person, and sent magnificent presents to the then Sultan of Turkey, Achmel III, thereby obtaining, not only a free pardon for his misdeeds but also the recognition of his rule over Tripolitania. But the relations between his country and the European Powers were distinctly strained. Just as during the rule of the Turks who had preceded him, so now the depredations of the hordes of pirates who infested the Mediterranean caused continual friction between the Karamanli and the Powers who suffered at the hands of these corsairs.

In 1728 Achmet Karamanli was forced to sign a treaty with France, when things went a little better. He was succeeded by his son, Mohamed Pacha, during whose rule the corsairs became more audacious than ever under the covert toleration, not to say encouragement, of the Pacha. The French ships appear to have suffered most, till finally Tripoli was bombarded by a French

fleet. This improved matters for a time, but the Karamanli seem to have been incapable of restraining their pirate subjects for any considerable period.

Mohamed Pacha's successor was his son Ali Pacha, who had three sons—Ali, Achmet, and Yussuf; and now comes the beginning of the end so far as the Karamanli rule is concerned. Yussuf, the youngest son, was intensely jealous of Ali Bey, his eldest brother, a man of fine character. The Pacha, however, preferred Yussuf, who was more attractive outwardly and a born intriguer. There was continual friction between the brothers, Yussuf trying to provoke Ali to an open quarrel, until finally the younger brother made up his mind to remove this obstacle from the path of his ambition, which was, of course, to become Pacha at his father's death. It is perhaps one of the most tragic and treacherous deeds in the history of family feuds, showing in a remarkable manner the two sides of the Arab character, inherited individually by these brothers—the one noble, frank, incapable of even believing in the evil disposition of his brother; the other full of darkest treachery.

Declaring his intention to be reconciled with his brother, Yussuf arrived at the castle one day in the August of 1790. Going to his mother's apartments, he announced his wish, whereupon she sent messengers requesting Ali

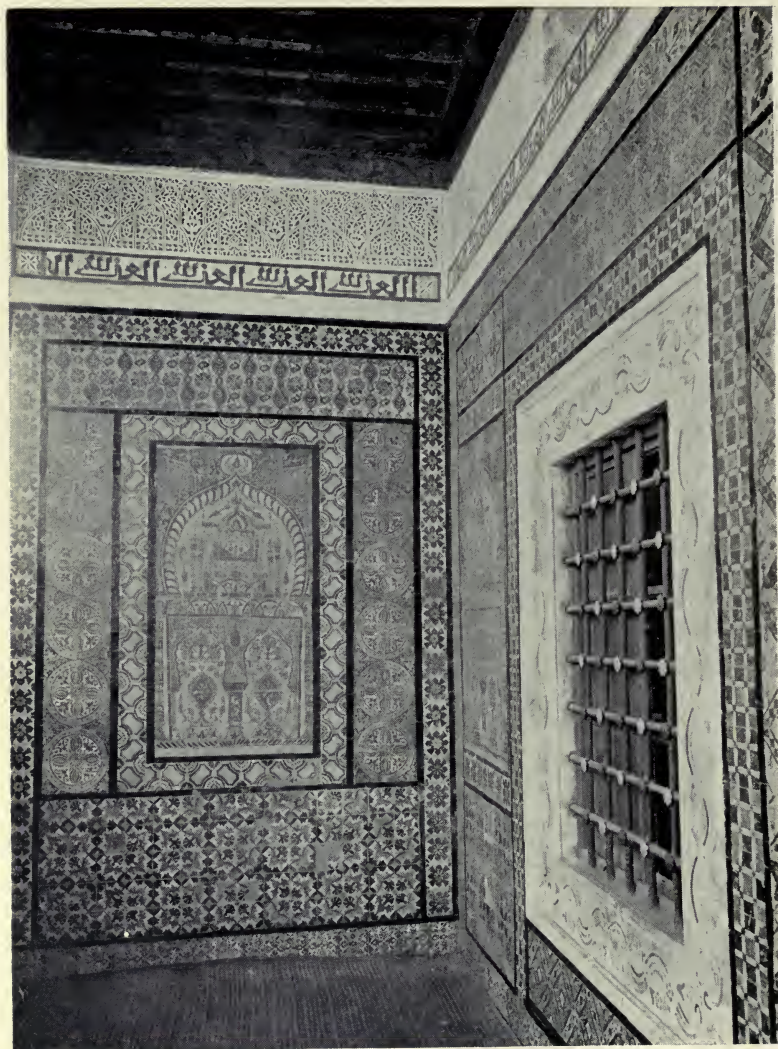
Bey to come, unarmed, to meet his brother. This he was perfectly ready to do, in all the openness of his unsuspecting nature, but his wife, who, like every one else, was suspicious of the good faith of Yussuf, implored him to take his sword, to which he finally agreed. His mother, happy as any mother would be at the prospect of reconciliation between her sons, met him at the door, when, seeing his sword, she begged him to lay it aside, saying that Yussuf was with her unarmed. Ali Bey instantly took off his sword and placed it on a table in the room. Then his mother, leading both her sons to a sofa, sat down between them, holding a hand of each, for she was completely deceived as to the intentions of Yussuf. Ali generously hastened to be the first to hold out the olive-branch, assuring his younger brother that he looked upon both him and Achmet, the second brother, as his sons, loving them as such. "Then," said Yussuf, "you will have no objection to swearing this on the Koran?"

"With all my heart," replied Ali. Whereupon Yussuf stood up and called in a loud voice for the Koran to be brought in. Instantly his black servants brought him, not the Koran but his pistols, for this was the preconcerted signal. Taking one, he fired at his brother as he sat by his mother's side. The mother stretched out her arm to protect her son, and was wounded in the

hand, but the ball entered Ali's side. Staggering to his sword, he seized it, but before he could turn to strike the treacherous Yussuf again fired, and the wounded man fell to the ground. Then, calling to his servants, Yussuf pointed to the yet breathing body, saying, "There is the Bey! finish him!" They dragged him from the room and dispatched him with a musket shot.¹

Achmet now became Bey in his brother Ali's place, whereupon Yussuf (who must have been a really attractive person!) began to occupy himself with plans for the removal of *this* obstacle also. He retired into the country while collecting a band of followers. For two years he harassed his luckless father, the Pacha, and Achmet Bey, besieging them and cutting off supplies. Just as he was on the point of entering Tripoli, a Turkish corsair with several ships arrived on the scene, taking the city by surprise. The Pacha and Achmet joined forces with Yussuf, united thus by the fear of a common enemy, all three taking refuge with Hamouda, the Bey of Tunis. The latter, taking sides with them, came with an army and chased the Turks out of Tripoli, reinstating the Karamanli. After Ali Pacha's death, Yussuf, the ambitious and unscrupulous, easily forced his weaker

¹ The details of the assassination are taken from the letters of an English lady, sister-in-law of the British Consul, Mr. Tully. The letters date from 1783 to 1793.



DECORATION IN THE GURGI MOSQUE.

Built during the rule of Yussuf Karamanli.

brother Achmet to resign his claim, thus at last realizing his dream by becoming Pacha in his father's stead. His rule, however, was far from being a bed of roses. Although he had now attained the height of his ambition, the man was by nature too restless and intriguing to be content with a quiet life. At the time of Napoleon Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt he secretly favoured the French, though supposed to be friendly to the English, and in 1801 Bonaparte concluded a definite treaty with him. But when the Napoleonic wars came to an end once more the European Powers had their attention drawn to the continual attacks and depredations of the corsairs, who spread desolation and terror on every side of the European coasts. Again Yussuf was called to order. This was in 1819, but six years later we find him in conflict with the King of Sardinia, his fleet annihilated and himself forced to sign a treaty. But treaties were just so much waste-paper to Yussuf. A year afterwards France intervened, obliging him to pay compensation to the Pope for damage caused by the corsairs to the pontifical vessels. Irritated by this intervention, the Pacha intrigued against the French Consul in Tripoli. An Englishman, Major Laing, was assassinated by natives in the interior, and Yussuf tried to throw the blame of the instigation on the French Consul. A minute

inquiry by the English and French Governments proved the absolute falseness of this attack, and shortly after the taking of Algiers France sent a fleet to Tripoli. Yussuf was compelled yet again to humiliate himself, to give an undertaking that Christians should no longer be held as slaves in Tripolitania, and that piracy should cease once and for all. These continued humiliations infuriated the subjects of Yussuf Pacha, and in 1831 Abd-el-Selib, Caid of Uled-Shinan, proclaimed an insurrection against him, taking possession of Fezzan. Yussuf's two younger sons, Ibrahim and Hammoura, were sent against him but returned unsuccessful. Just at this critical moment England demanded a considerable sum as compensation for damages by the corsairs to her vessels. Unable to pay the money, Yussuf levied a tax on the inhabitants of the Menscia, who from time immemorial had been exempt from such impositions. This was the last straw. The people to a man rose against him and deposed him from the throne. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Ali Bey, but civil war continued in the country, owing to the pretensions to the throne of another member of the family, Mohamed Karamanli. This was made a pretext by the Turks to interfere, and in 1835 a Turkish fleet, commanded by Negib Pacha, was sent to Tripoli. Ali Bey, who seems to have been rather a naïve person,

went on board the vessel of the Turkish commander to confer with him. But he did not return to Tripoli. The Turks informed him that he was deposed from the throne, and deported him to Constantinople. His brothers, Ibrahim and Hammoura, remained in Tripoli, under the Turkish rule, for Negib Pacha took possession of Tripolitania in the name of the Sultan. The family of Ibrahim is extinct. Hassouna Pacha, the present Mayor of Tripoli, is the son of Hammoura and nephew of Ali Bey, the last reigning Pacha of the family of the Karamanli.

**ROMAN
REMAINS**



ROMAN REMAINS AT ASSABA.

CHAPTER VI

ROMAN REMAINS

Arch of Marcus Aurelius—Inscription on architrave—North arch—
East arch—Cupola roof—Roman tombs near the Fort of the
Mole—Recent discoveries—Museum.

IT strikes one as a very interesting page in the history of Tripoli that the Italians should have returned to the possession of this country, in which the Romans have left so many wonderful monuments, dating from the time of the occupation, 106 B.C., after the Punic Wars, at which period Tripolitania was annexed by them until the fifth century. These remains have been discovered in various parts of the country, and quite recently some fine mosaic floors have been unearthed at Sliten, not far from Homs, about sixty miles east from Tripoli. In the town of Tripoli itself there is first and foremost the famous marble arch of Marcus Aurelius (which has already been mentioned in the first chapter of this book), and in visiting which we spent a most interesting morning with the chief of the Research Department.

Just at present there are supports and scaffolding about the arch, until such time as the work of cleaning and restoring shall be finished—this will be in about a couple of months' time. Then the dirty little houses which crowd in upon it are to be destroyed and the space all round cleared, so that it shall appear in all its grandeur, free from such sordid surroundings. It was constructed in A.D. 163 by Caius Calpurnius Celsus, a rich citizen of Tripoli, which was then known by the name of Oea.¹ Built to commemorate the victory of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus against the tribes of Asia Minor, it was dedicated by a Roman Proconsul. Where the arch stands used to be a spot where two principal streets met and crossed, the Zenghet-el-Francis, which was then a long straight road continuing to the Bab-el-Herrir, and the other a road which led up from the sea to the Hara delle Ebrai (Jewish) quarter and thence out of the city. It has four fronts, resembling in this respect the arch of Janus in Rome. Two other examples of this four-fronted type exist, one in Homs, the other (in honour of Caracalla) at Tebessa, in Algeria.

The northern front is by far the best preserved, probably on account of less exposure to the action of sun and rain. On the upper portion of the front

¹ Tripolis (three towns, Roman division) { Oea (Tripoli),
Labrato (west from Tripoli),
Leptis Magna (east from Tripoli).

are two griffins' heads; to the left a torso with cloak; the head is gone, as is the case with almost every figure. Lower down are a lyre, a bow, and a sheaf of arrows. On the left is a figure of Minerva with a sphinx, the wings and body of the latter intact. The griffins mentioned were discovered in a room which had been built on the upper portion of the arch, and was being used to form a screen behind which coal was kept.

Farther down on each side is the lower half of a Roman soldier, with short tunic, the upper part having been destroyed. On the left-hand side below this figure is a very interesting and well-preserved group representing the conquered province. A bearded barbarian stands with hands crossed and bound in front of him, his cloak bordered with ermine to show his royal state. His wife and child are represented seated before him, a cloak being thrown over their heads to denote grief. The supporting columns are exquisitely carved, while on the left is the tree of life, with bunches of fruit and leaves.

Much of the inscription on the architrave is legible. It is in four lines, as follows, the missing portions being those in brackets :—

1. Imp(eratori) Cæs(ari) M(arco) Aurelio Antonino Aug(usto) et imp(eratori) Cæs(ari) L(ucio) Aurelio Vero Armeniaco Aug(usto).

2. Ser(gius) Cornelius Salvidienus Orfitus proco(n) s(ul) cum Uttedio Marcello leg(ato) suo dedicavit.

3. C(aius) Calpurnius Celsus curator muneris publici Munerarius, (duum) vir q(uin) q(nennalis), flamen perpetuus.

4. ARCUM pec(unia) sua solo publico et fundamentis marmore solido fecit.

The east arch is not so well preserved, but the two figures of Victory are more or less clear, especially that on the left. Below are two niches, one on either side, which probably held statues, whilst over them are medallions, much broken and destroyed, most likely to the Emperor and Proconsul.

There are the remains of a magnificent column on the left, which has only lately been uncovered. It was hidden by the little shops built up all around and inside the arch.

The ceiling of the niche on the right is remarkable, and wonderfully well preserved, as is also a beautiful piece of carving just above. All the marble comes from the islands of the Grecian Archipelago, and it is due to its particularly resistant quality that so much of the delicate carving still exists, in spite of the rough treatment to which it has been subjected.

The inside of the cupola roof is octagonal, formed of slabs of marble, each one carved with some fruit or flower. Unfortunately, the fine carving has been somewhat destroyed by a fire which took place about fifteen or twenty years ago in the shop or café which had been built

under the arch. There are four triangular corner pieces, only one of which is in a good state of preservation, standing out quite white against the rather blackened roof. The south and west sides, which correspond to the north and east, are much destroyed, but there are still remains to be seen of the griffins, also of a Victory and medallions.

One cannot be too thankful that this beautiful piece of ancient Rome has stood the stress of so many centuries during which Tripoli has passed through countless hands, to return at last into the possession of those who are surely best fitted to guard such a treasure.

As recently as May and June of 1912 the Italians have made very interesting discoveries of Roman tombs. These we are fortunate enough to be able to visit under the same guidance.

Turning to the left through the gate of the Fort of the Mole, which faces the harbour, we pass from cool shadow into a blaze of dazzling sunshine. For the sun is sinking low over the sea, transforming it into liquid golden fire. Our road lies along the new railway which has been built to facilitate the transport of sand and stone from Gargaresch and Zanzur for the new harbour works in Tripoli. To the left are the high walls of sand and rock through which the way has been cut, and it was during this excavation the tombs were discovered at a point where the rocky

wall is highest. Climbing to the right, up a little promontory, we find ourselves on a plateau of rock which was originally the level of the street in the time of the Romans. Behind us is the sheer cliff, bathed in the now crimson light of the setting sun, sinking like a ball of fire on the horizon, while beyond is the sea, lying at our feet like a fiery lake in the warm stillness and hush of the coming night. Around us are the open tombs. A few roughly cut steps lead downwards into a short passage. There we have to crouch down on the ground to peer through the little opening into the chamber beyond, about seven feet square. They have yielded up their relics after all these centuries of buried repose. From this tomb and from many others were taken a number of interesting objects which have been placed in the museum in the town. The remains of three or four skeletons were found, as well as many urns containing ashes of cremated bodies. These "urns," or vases of glass, are nearly all in a state of perfect preservation, owing to the fact of their having been placed in outer urns of lead.

Earthenware and iridescent glass vases and pots for perfumes and essences, water bottles and glasses, were removed and are to be seen in the museum.

One of the tombs, on the opposite side of the



ROMAN MAUSOLEUM (NEAR YEFFREN).

cutting, differs somewhat in construction from the others, with a row of niches which contained the urns.

Only a few weeks ago a small Roman mosaic was uncovered a little farther down the railway, towards the Bab Sjedid (New Gate). Just inside this gateway, which leads into the Jewish quarter, on the right-hand side, forming part of the existing city wall, is a small piece of the original Roman wall which surrounded the city in those far-off ages—great, solid blocks of stone which have stood the wear and tear of many centuries.

The Museum, close to the castle, in the Via Azizia, is a long, low building with a veranda, which used to be the guard-house for the castle guards in the time of the Turks. It has been restored and cleaned to receive the numerous interesting antiquities discovered in Tripolitania. There are several fine statues, notably a Victory, and a Bacchus with Satyr. There is also a small Venus which was discovered in Lebda (Leptis Magna), near Homs, in the Imperial Garden of the Turkish Governor. The poor man, shocked by her "unveiled" condition, had buried her. In constructing the new barracks on the spot where the garden used to be, the Italian soldiers found the statue, which is in a good state of preservation. Another remarkable figure on a very large scale probably represents Rome, judging by the short tunic and the caligi.

In glass cases are the relics found in the tombs already mentioned. In many of the glass vases or pots used for essences can still be seen a little dark-coloured liquid.

The first relic of the Christian era has been discovered above a Turkish fort, the fort of the lighthouse near the Bab Sjedid. It is a great block of stone which probably formed part of an architrave. In front are carved a cross and the words *Sanctus Deus*.

A beautiful marble fountain, with a group of finely sculptured entwined serpents supporting the bowl, is probably Florentine work, and was most likely brought into the country by the corsairs who infested the Mediterranean in the Middle Ages.

There are very few Arabic remains, the country under their rule was always too poor, but there is an octagonal fountain, grooved and carved with Arabic writing, which is interesting. There is also a little Greek monument, dedicated to the inhabitants of Syrenaica, a votive offering. Many cases of relics from all parts of the districts are still unpacked, as fresh discoveries are continually being brought in. When all is ready the Museum will be of the greatest interest.

**THE
POLITICAL
SITUATION**

CHAPTER VII

THE POLITICAL SITUATION

The religious problem—Political and administrative organization—Administration of justice—Land, property and colonization—Public education—Army—Health conditions—Schools—Observatory.

IN the course of a conversation with one of the higher Government officials in Tripoli, I gathered a good deal about the political situation which may be interesting to relate, if only from the point of view of the close analogy between the difficulties the Italians have to face in the conduct of their new colony and those with which we are familiar in the administration of our own Mussulman dependencies. First of all, as it was pointed out to me, Tripolitania has not been *annexed* to the kingdom of Italy, but has only been put under its dominion. Therefore the natives of Tripolitania are not Italian citizens, but merely Italian subjects, and Italian laws are not applied in the colony unless it is expressly declared. This is a fact which is often ignored, even in Italy. The main problem for solution is the right measure of regard for the

Mohammedan religion. Too much regard for the religious idea entails a dangerous diminution of the political power of the ruling State, while insufficient consideration would not fail to create a condition of incurable discontent and latent rebellion in the country. To strike the just mean is not altogether easy, but the Italian Government has in view a policy at the same time just and severe, having at heart the real welfare of the people, promoting agriculture, increasing trade and commerce, opening new ways of communication, entrusting these methods to competent and straightforward men whose idea is to keep themselves as much as possible in contact with the natives. Such a policy should not fail to bring good results.

I asked for a brief outline of the political and administrative organization, which has been slightly complicated by the fact that even before the Italian occupation the degree of civilization of the coast region, especially in the neighbourhood of Tripoli, was much more advanced than in the interior.

Following the example of France in Algeria and Tunisia, the territory of Tripolitania has been divided into different zones, one under civil and one under military control. The chief difference in the administration of the two zones lies in the fact that the latter is *directly* entrusted to military officials, the court martial having wider powers: for the rest the same laws are applied everywhere.



LOCAL ADMINISTRATION.

The local administration of the country is entrusted to King's Commissioners, who have the Residents under their control, the latter ruling through the native Kaimakans, who are appointed by the Governor. The fact that there are different races living side by side in Tripolitania has made it necessary to adopt, not only a double legislation but also a double series of organs for the administration of justice. While for the Italians and the foreigners of corresponding civilizations such administration can be almost the same as that of the mother country, for the Mohammedans it was impossible to do without those religious judges who get their authority from the law of the Koran. All those matters in which law is mixed with religion are left to the Cadi, together with those partaking of the hereditary law, which in Mohammedan countries has a strong religious character; but their decisions are subject to the supervision of the Italian court. The same system has been adopted for the Jews, without the automatic assimilation which does not seem to have been productive of very satisfactory results in Algeria.

A great deal has been said about the *colonization* of Tripoli, but before thinking of any such departure, it was necessary to organize the land property so as to make the buying or renting of it possible, and, what was still more important, *secure*. This has now been done, and registers for the inscrip-

tion of all land property have been instituted, following the system first applied in Australia many years ago, and then adopted in other colonies. In the meantime a great part of the country has been systematically studied as far as quality of the soil, water supply, agriculture, and climatic conditions are concerned, so as to make it possible to start a colonization on sound principles. In answer to my question as to the lines on which public education will be administered, I gathered that it is to have a decidedly modern character. It is a difficult problem with a Mohammedan population, because of the religious question. Just now what is most needed is technical and agricultural schooling, and the Government is at present working on these lines, leaving the rest aside. As regards the troops, it is evident for obvious reasons that for a long time it will be necessary to leave a few metropolitan troops in the country. But they are being continually reduced, and eventually will only occupy a few points on the coast. For the rest of the colony two kinds of special troops are being instituted, Italian volunteers and native troops. Of the latter many infantry battalions and cavalry squadrons have already been formed, besides a good number of *zapties* (native police).

The administration of the town of Tripoli and of

the hospital institutions is controlled by a Commission composed of three members—one Arab, Hassouna Pacha, and two Italians, who are Government functionaries. The city is divided into ten quarters, six of them within the walls and four outside, the latter entirely inhabited by Arabs, while of the first six, four have a mixed population of Europeans and Arabs, and the other two are almost exclusively inhabited by the Jews. The general total of the population, exclusive of the military garrison, is 72,130—including 12,358 Italians and 2,434 foreign residents.

Based on the authority of the Director of the Hospitals, I may say that within the space of two years, since the war that is to say, Tripolitania has been practically freed from the diseases which infected it. Trachoma has been attacked with intense zeal, and already much reduced. It was rampant two years ago, in the native barracks, in the schools, and amongst the native population. Syphilis, contagious and hereditary, widely diffused among the natives, especially under the skin form, was enormously benefited by mercurial and "salvarsam" cures. The appalling ulcers, common among the Arabs, caused by dirt and neglect, have practically vanished, thanks to hygienic improvement. Gastric inflammation, acute and chronic, has been reduced to a minimum, chiefly owing to the improved water supply.

A small experimental sanatorium for consumptives has been founded in an excellent position just outside the walls of the city. It has every advantage, for the air is of the best and the water excellent. No doubt in time it will prove to be a boon to many. I visited the Technical Commercial School in Tripoli (International) which was founded by the Italians twenty-five years ago. Before the occupation there were comparatively few scholars; now the numbers have risen enormously. This year a new Classical course has been opened. There are also Elementary Government schools for boys and girls, and a Kindergarten. There is a professional school for the Arabs, under Government control, where they are taught carpet-making. Besides these there is a Franciscan school for boys and an orphan school for Arab children.

The Director of the Technical School is at the same time the head of the Meteorological Observatory, which was founded over twenty years ago, and is built on the terrace of the school. Every morning a meteorological telegram is sent to Rome, as the Observatory depends from that in Rome.

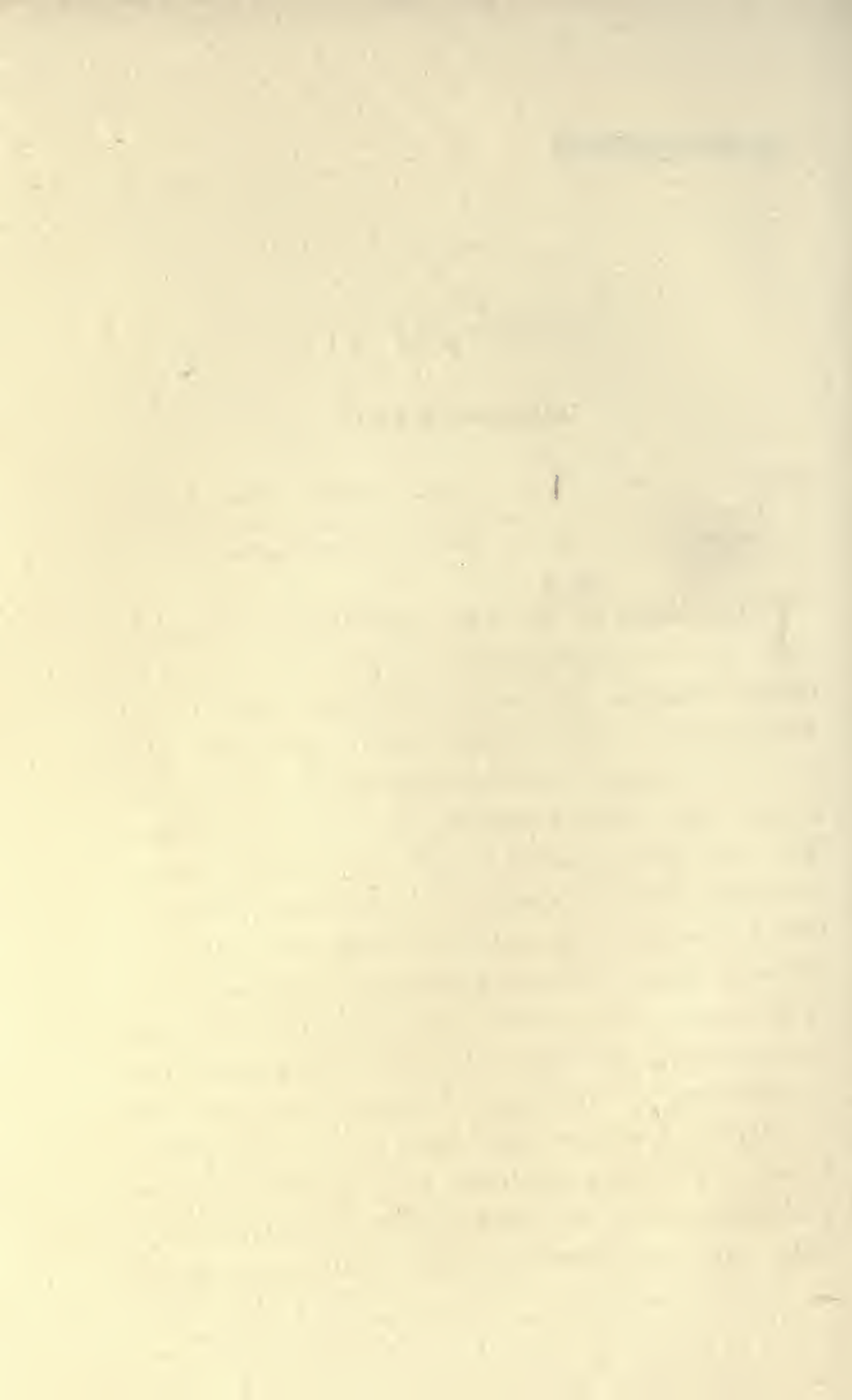
We climbed up a narrow staircase into the Observatory, where we saw the various apparatus for registering barometric pressure, temperature, force and direction of the wind, and the hygrometer (for measuring the dampness of the air).



GROUP OF ARAB DIGNITARIES.

The Director told me some interesting facts about the climate of the country, which, although variable, is wonderfully healthy. The annual rainfall averages $16\frac{3}{4}$ inches, with the highest average in December. The rainy season lasts from October to February, but is variable, beginning sometimes earlier, sometimes later. On an average there are about fifty-one rainy days in the year. The thermometer never goes down to freezing point, and the maximum does not pass 43° Centigrade. The *ghibli*, or south wind, which crosses the desert, is terribly hot in the summer months but cold in the winter, owing to the fact that before reaching the desert it passes over the mountains of the Gebel. It is preceded by strong depressions of the barometer, and is accompanied by a relative diminution of rain or dampness. Taken altogether, the temperatures are very much those of Southern Sicily, the neighbouring coasts of the mother country.

IMPROVEMENTS



CHAPTER VIII

IMPROVEMENTS

Public Works Department—Principal problems—Water supply—
Drainage — Roads — Buildings — Hospital improvements —
Scheme for the new city—Public gardens—Railways.

THANKS to the kind permission granted to me by headquarters, I have been able to obtain valuable information from the Public Works Department. This enables me to give some idea as to the present development and future growth of the city, which promises to be of great interest. The principal problem which the Italians had to face after their occupation was, first and foremost, the obtaining of a pure and sufficient supply of drinking water. Not less important was the matter of drainage. The construction of new roads and the repairing of those already existing, and the construction of buildings necessary to the new development of the town had also to be undertaken. The first problem was attacked by the authorities with the greatest energy and promptitude. In consequence of the insufficiency of the

reservoir at Bumeliana, and of the deplorable state in which the Turks had left the conduits, fever and disease were rampant after the Italian occupation. To check these evils the Public Works Department at once set to work to improve the condition of the springs and reservoir, and provided the city with a new conduit. The supply from Bumeliana proving insufficient, a new filtering gallery, furnishing a daily supply of 2,000 cubic metres, was constructed near Fort Hamidieh (eastwards from Tripoli, off the Shara Shat road), where experiments had discovered the existence of an abundant subterranean water surface. The water is raised by machinery, and by means of a conduit is conveyed to a cement-lined reservoir, holding 2,000 tons, situated in the locality of Dahara. Thence it is distributed throughout Tripoli, giving a daily allowance of about seven gallons per head for the whole population. Plans for a second filtering gallery from the Hamidieh have already been commenced, in preparation for the future increased demands of a growing population. The Maritime Sanitary Station, the hospitals, the Bacteriological Laboratory, and the Workmen's Pavilions were all furnished with special conduits. Other plans are under consideration for administering the water supply from the springs of Ain Diebana, and for the complete exploitation of the subterranean water layers of Tripoli.



PLAN OF THE FUTURE TRIPOLI.



DINNER-TIME FOR THE BOYS OF THE MENSOCIA SCHOOL.

The problem of drainage is being carried out on the following lines. The sewers of the city, which were limited and in a bad state, were repaired and improved wherever it was found possible to use those existing at the time of the occupation. At the same time provisional complementary drains have been made in preparation for a great general system embracing the present and the future city.

To obtain the necessary cleansing of the sewers plans have been made for two reservoirs of salt water, which will also serve for the purpose of producing the water in cases of outbreak of fire.

The drainage system is of the promiscuous type, with two principal mains which run into the sea towards the north-west, beyond the port, one starting from the square of the future workmen's quarter, the other from the fountain near the castle.

The section of the principal sewers will be chiefly of the oval English type, the secondary section represented by ditches and moats. All flushes and outlets will be submerged.

Another matter of no less importance was that of the roads. Most of them had not been looked after in any sense of the word, and many were absolutely impracticable. The thick sand accumulated during the summer was transformed during

the rainy season into a sea of mud, so that the principal arteries of the city answered but poorly to the needs of the traffic. The substructures have been temporarily repaired in the principal streets to ensure cohesion and drainage. In the spring of 1914 nearly all will be systematically arranged, so that the roadways of the town will respond to public exigencies.

As to external roads, the one which passes the Cavalry Barracks has been repaired in a rational manner, while a first section of the road leading from the bread-market to Gargaresch is in course of reconstruction.

The work of construction of a wide street which shall join the Sparto Place with the Dahara quarter has been initiated, as also the first section of the road from Tripoli to Tajura. This latter is of the first importance, both from the military and the commercial side, demonstrated by the great traffic which now exists.

The square and streets near the Customs House have been enlarged and improved. But the road works which are in course of construction in the city itself are of a provisional character *only* at present. The solution of this complex problem could not be carried out at once, because it depends in a great measure on the development of the drainage system. Many of the existing streets will be raised and enlarged, many new ones will

be made. Some will be provided with high walls as in that of the Tajura Road, intended to support, not only the present road level but also that of the future plan which is now being drawn up. This plan includes, besides the amelioration of existing roads and construction of new ones, squares planted with trees, and public gardens with fountains, which will freshen the heated air of the town in the blazing summer months.

Chief among the new buildings raised by the Italians since the war is the Maritime Sanitary Station. This building, large and well arranged, was constructed to provide a means of satisfying the hygienic exigencies. It is provided with instruments on the latest modern lines, complete laboratories for study and research, disinfecting apparatus, electric light plant, drinking water and laundries—altogether an institute which compares well with that in any European town.

The Civil Hospital, renamed the Vittorio Emmanuele, and the Bacteriological Laboratory have been enlarged and reorganized, provided with water supply, electric light, and with every essential improvement according to perfectly modern standards. For example, in the time of the Turks the hospital (a building in the form of the letter **U**) was kept in a revolting state of neglect and dirt, so much so that the natives

preferred to die in their wretched homes or on the roadway, for they looked on the hospital as "the place of death."

Thanks to the large sums of money spent by Italy in raising new buildings and restoring the old ones, it is transformed into a truly hygienic place of cure. I had the pleasure of going over the whole hospital with the doctor in charge, and can testify to its exceedingly modern organization.

There is one operating theatre for septic cases, and a second one, larger, for aseptic cases. The apparatus in both is of the most modern type. There is an X-ray room, a large microscopic laboratory, a chemical laboratory, and a library for doctors and patients. The natives came, not only willingly but eagerly to be treated. I saw many patients in the various wards, men, women, and children, numbers suffering from the hereditary "hidden plague," others from acute gastritis, consumption, or trachoma.

The pavilion for contagious diseases stands well apart from the rest, and all are separated from one another by broad pathways with flower borders, which make a most cheery effect.

The cemeteries, Christian and Mussulman, have been systematized, and provided with mortuaries and chambers for autopsies.

Many other works of minor importance were started and are in course of completion. The Boys'

1914



A GOVERNMENT SCHOOL FOR ARAB BOYS.

School and the Technical School were thoroughly overhauled with special regard to the hygienic point of view.

The rapidly increasing commerce of Tripoli will necessitate the enlargement and better distribution of the Customs House offices, and there is a project for the construction of new warehouses and of railed-in squares in that locality.

The General Post Office is to be enlarged, and the improved arrangement of barracks and existing factories is occupying a great deal of attention.

Four pavilions were constructed for the workmen of the city, two by two, provided with baths douches, and modern hygienic conveniences. A special workmen's restaurant has just been finished, so that it is hoped the working-men will be able to live in comfort without much expense. Then for the employees there is a plan to provide two large buildings, one near the Bastions, close to the Gate of Justice, and the other near the American Consulate.

Another important project which is being drawn up is the erection of a new General Post Office of imposing dimensions, and other offices for the Public Works Department, in conformity with the plan of the new city. This is the scheme for the New Tripoli, which was most kindly sent to me by the Public Works Department and which is *most* interesting as giving the sketch

of the town as it will be in the future. The old city within the walls, formed by the Arab and Jewish quarters, is to be left almost entirely untouched, and as much as possible separated from the new European town, with its four branching roads, which lead from the bread-market towards the oasis. Restored and embellished, this will be the heart of the future city. Thence will start a great thoroughfare, which, following approximately the street of El Garbi as far as the German Consulate, and thence keeping parallel with the walls, will lead to a large square by the sea, towards the north-west, opposite the New Gate.

From the German Consulate a second street will lead to the railway-station, thence continuing towards Gargaresch, while a third road will connect the station with the New Gate.

In the triangle formed by these will be the zone destined to be the centre of the future *European* city.

Between the coast of Gargaresch, the road of that name, and the thoroughfare between the New Gate and the station will be the industrial zone, in the immediate vicinity of the European quarter, connected by the railway line already existing.

The new city, modern and elegant, composed of villas and buildings standing in their own gardens, will rise along the coast from the Esparto Place eastwards, towards Tajura.

Finally the Dahara, properly reorganized with

widened streets, will present the aspect of a native suburb.

The Esparto Place is to be restored, and a monument raised in memory of the soldiers who fell in the war, while in the centre of the European town a large square is to be formed. All will have gardens, with pathways bordered with trees, which arrangement will also hold good in the principal streets.

Of the Public Gardens the principal will be by the sea in the zone occupied by the existing Garden of the Cadi, as far as the Imperial Barracks. Another will be located at the so-called point of the Lazaretto, and from this elevated position will command a wonderful panorama. All along by the sea there will be a "broad walk," which, starting from the castle, will skirt the Esparto Place and the Public Garden, until it arrives at the Tombs of the Karamanli.

The communications with the port will be two in number—one between the bread-market and the eastern quay of the castle, and the other from the Clock Tower Place to the quay below the Bastions. The principal public buildings which will be constructed are the Governor's palace, the Palace of the Prefecture (literally translated—viz., chief police - station), Palace of Justice (Law Courts), those of the Intermediate Schools Municipality, and Military Headquarters.

Carried out on these lines, the Italians have destined Tripoli to become a beautiful city, keeping intact her picturesque native quarters and erecting a European town which should in time become a delightful winter resort, for which the place and climate are eminently fitted.

There are four existing lines of railway—Tripoli-Tajura ; Tripoli-Alin Zara ; Tripoli-Zanzur ; Tripoli-Azizia. In construction, Azizia-Gharian ; Zanzur-Zavia ; Tajura-Homs.



ONE OF THE FIRST LOCOMOTIVES IN TRIPOLI.

**THE
PORT OF
TRIPOLI**

CHAPTER IX

THE PORT OF TRIPOLI

Plan of port works—Principal and secondary piers—Landing-place—Bed of the harbour—Works in actual construction—First arm of the principal pier—Breakwater and quay—Dredging and deepening of the harbour—Future undertakings.

AS may easily be understood, the question of the port occupied the keenest attention of the Italian Government. Immediately after the occupation plans for the execution of the most urgent work were put in hand, as also those for the definite regulation of the port. In course of conversation with the officials who have charge of this most important undertaking I learnt that the chief works which are now being pushed forward with all possible speed will be on the following lines.

A principal outer pier will be constructed, which, starting from the Spanish fort, facing the *greco*, or north-east wind, will unite all the rocks which at that point jut out of the sea. Then, turning towards the *scirocco*, or south-east wind, it will join the end of the western sandbank of the entrance.

Another secondary pier will start from the Tombs of the Karamanli, facing the *maestro*, or north-west wind, and will identify itself with the eastern shoal of the entrance. The whole will thus form a very fine harbour which will efficiently protect the shipping from the terrific storms which break upon the coasts during the months of December and January.

The work of construction of landing-places, with modern machinery, cranes and salients, storehouses, sheds, penthouses, etc., is all in hand at the present moment. The port will also be furnished with wet-docks, scaling ladders, coal storehouses, and so on.

A series of accurate soundings have proved that the rocky bed of the harbour is to be met with near the coast at a depth of only 7 ft., deepening towards the centre of the basin to 50 ft. The character of this loose bed of dissolved material is such as to permit a general deepening of the harbour for a great distance by 33 to 40 ft. This is of immense importance, and will be undertaken as soon as possible.

The works in course of construction have been divided into different periods. The more urgent will be comprised in the first period and carried through by contract. These are :—

(a) The construction of a first arm of the pier in a single line, which, starting from the Spanish



MELONS FOR SALE.

fort and leaving the first reef of rocks to the west, will join the rocks of the east base, forming a length of 2,260 ft.

(b) The construction of a breakwater or defence against the storms from the north-east. This, starting from the rocks of the east base, will have a length of 700 ft.

(c) The completion of a first portion of the walled quay for a length of 500 ft. supported by lateral blocks of stone, thus forming a salient of approximately 1,000 ft. long when finished.

(d) The destruction of the existing sandbanks at the entrance to the port, and the deepening of the bottom in the zone facing the walled quay. The cost of these works is estimated at £100,000, forming an aggregate, with the other works, of £160,000.

There were immense difficulties to be overcome in the matter of landing all the heavy machinery, owing to the fact that the landing-places were not completed and the sea far from smooth.

The great blocks of stone brought from the quarries of Gargaresch were carried to the port on trollies running on a special line along the coast about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles long, which was completed in three months, in spite of the deep tunnellings which had to be made, 50 ft. high, and the work of protecting the line from the sea.

It may be interesting to state how much of these harbour works have been completed up to December 31, 1913. The outer pier is completely finished; there only remains to be completed a good part of the protecting wall, and this work is proceeding actively. We realized the immense protection this construction will prove to the harbour as we watched the huge waves during the storms in December, breaking in clouds of spray against the solid blocks of the quay. The junction of the pennon of natural rocks at the reef of the east base is almost finished. The parapet wall of the quay is completed, as is also the work of destroying the sandbanks at the entrance to the harbour.

There are other works under consideration. One important undertaking is that of the construction of a second arm of the pier, to extend in the same direction as the existing one, and destined to close the opening between the reef of the east base and the reef III°. The length of this new arm will be over 1,700 ft., and with its construction the defence of the harbour against the violent storms will be completed.

The dredging of the harbour will be continued with the double object of deepening the bottom and of digging out the material in order to fill in the cavities, so as to obtain in the whole zone of the port a general depth of between 24 and

25 ft. This depth will continue till within a distance of 33 ft. from the quay wall. From this point until near the fort of the wall the excavations will be continued to a depth of 23 ft. The wharves will be directly accessible to steamers with a draught of 20 ft.

It is intended that with the execution of the remaining part of the plan for the regulation of the port quays shall be built, 30 and 33 ft. below the sea-level, for the direct access of the transatlantic steamers.

Future works of minor importance consist of the demolition of that part of the city walls which lies between the Radio Telegraph Office and the New Gate, of the systematizing of the existing channel of communication between the inner basin of the harbour and the open sea, so as to admit of direct access to the Maritime Sanitary Station, and of the partial or complete demolition of the existing landing-places.

This harbour scheme is the most important of all the works in Tripoli, and is estimated altogether at £300,000. It may be pointed out that the Italians are greatly helped by the fact that they are able to bring all the stone needed for these comprehensive works from the Gargaresch quarries at comparatively little cost.

It may not be amiss here to give some idea

of the trade returns for 1912—though it is natural to expect that when the new port is finished there should be a very considerable increase in these returns.

TABLE OF IMPORTS AND EXPORTS, 1912. TRIPOLI.

	Imports.	Exports.
	Lire.	Lire.
Italy	10,961,168.80	1,056,870
France	7,189,824.50 ¹	1,366,924 ³
England	1,698,803 ²	642,176 ²
Germany... ..	1,155,415	
Austria-Hungary	1,363,752	
Other countries ...	<u>5,413,023.80</u>	<u>962,550</u>
Totals	27,781,985.10	4,028,520

¹ France and Tunisia.

² England and Malta.

³ France, Algeria, and Tunisia.



NATIVE TROOPS.

**THE ARABS
OF
TRIPOLI**

CHAPTER X

THE ARABS OF TRIPOLI

Feast of Aïd Askrira—Old customs—Modern amusements at the
Feast—Language—Carelessness in illness—Dress of the women
—The *hammam*—Birth feast.

TO-DAY, the 9th of November, begins the Mohammedan feast of Aïd Askrira, lasting four days, during which a good deal of noise goes on in Tripoli. The feast really began yesterday evening with the illumination of the minarets of all the mosques, the town seen from our roof terrace looking as though it were hung in every direction with necklaces of yellow diamonds. Very early this morning we were roused by the cannons which were fired to celebrate the beginning of the first day of the holiday, and which will boom forth throughout the day at the hours of the Muezzins' call to prayer. The Aïd Askrira commemorates the sacrifice of Abraham, and for some time beforehand the Arabs are all busy buying sheep. Every family that can afford it buys one or more, the rich giving to those who are too poor to buy one for

themselves, and at this time the sheep-market is the scene of lively altercations, while the luckless animals are prodded and examined in a way that no prize sheep at our shows would endure for a moment. On the 9th they are all slaughtered, and a great feast takes place in every Arab house that evening. The rest of the meat is cut up into strips, salted, and hung up on cords to dry, forming food for the winter. This afternoon we stroll through the Market Place to see the Arabs, young and old, enjoying themselves. It is amusing to watch the mixture of primitive and modern diversions. Here on the left, in a café, is gathered a large crowd, listening to an enormous phonograph, of the very latest pattern, droning out endless Arab love songs. Close by a boy is sitting on the ground making reed pipes, for which he finds a ready sale, and from which he produces (*we* cannot, try as we may) a plaintive music, weirdly seductive. Now we come to the merry-go-rounds—yes, just as it might be at any English village fair, though rather more primitive of construction. No gorgeous boats or swans, no brilliantly coloured horses with flowing manes, but rough wooden seats, a few with carved sides, but many just a plank to sit upon with another as a back, attached by ropes to a pole driven into the ground, while the motive power is not electricity or steam, but just Arab boys, who push with might and main, working



ARAB BOYS BATHING.



ON THE MERRY-GO-ROUNDS AT THE FEAST OF AÏD ASKRIRA.

hard to keep the pleasure-seekers in a giddy whirl. They are a mixed company, these merry-go-rounders: little Arab girls in their holiday finery, rather uneasy and self-conscious, with their brothers to protect them; jolly, laughing little negresses in brilliant-hued frocks and coloured handkerchiefs; Arab boys, big and small, with not a few grown-ups, men who are ostensibly taking care of their children but who are really enjoying the fun as much as any one. The sweet-sellers and the negresses with their baskets of nuts are doing a great trade. There are any number of donkeys to be hired for a scamper down the Market Place, with their small drivers whacking and vociferating, the riders, in very smart velvet embroidered coats, spotless white shirts, and handsome fezzes, shouting "*Balek! balek!*" Carts drawn by mules gallop past us, full of Arabs who want to show off their holiday attire.

Farther on a crowd has gathered around the blind musicians seated on the ground. One plays a *darbouka*, another a glorified reed pipe, while the third intones a succession of religious chants. Up against a wall sits a fortune-teller, a very old man with a long white beard. He has a board in front of him, covered with fine yellow sand. Hold some in your hand till it is warm, then pour it back, and he will trace holes and cabalistic signs which make your future an open book to him. It

is always the same—much riches and many sons who will bring honour and fame to your house.

The women, of course, are nowhere to be seen. They are all busy at home preparing the evening feast, which assumes gigantic proportions. Two things are essential should you ever be invited to partake of an Arab feast—courage and an excellent digestion.

The Arab women of Tripoli wear in the house a very graceful long silken or gauze wrap, some fifteen yards in length, twisted over the head and round the figure like an Indian *sarai* in graceful folds. It is exceedingly becoming to their lissome figures. The sleeves of the white or coloured chemisette show underneath, as also the full trousers, gathered in round the ankles. They move noiselessly, with voluptuous turn of the arms and hips, every motion full of ease and grace, as they bend over the multifarious pots and dishes containing ingredients for the national dish, the *kous-kous*—grain, fruit, peppers, meat, and so on—arranged all round them on the floor. It is a real pleasure to watch a group of Arab women preparing a meal.

The language of Tripolitania is much purer than that of the Tunisian Arabs; the farther east towards Egypt the more classic the Arabs. But the women have quite different expressions for many things from those of the men, who contemptuously call their words "women's talk."

They are extraordinarily careless about illness, having the strongest objection to the use of medicine, even for smallpox, which is looked upon as a visitation from Allah, unless blindness seems likely to follow the disease, when they are eager enough for treatment. But those who have visited among the women of Tunis and Tripoli say that the latter have far more intelligence generally.

On Mondays and Thursdays, particularly the latter day, at midday and during the early hours of the afternoon groups of mysterious women, closely shrouded in their *barracans*, slowly make their way through the narrow, tortuous streets of the Arab quarter to the *hammam* (Turkish bath). Almost always there is an attendant negress, on her head a basket filled with the unguents, oils, and perfumes with which the Arab women anoint themselves after the bath. The principal *hammam* in Tripoli, in a *zenghet* (street) close to the Dragut Mosque, was built by Dragut Pacha in the sixteenth century. In those days the receipts, which are considerable, went, in common with the receipts of all public places of entertainment, to the upkeep of the city walls. Now the proceeds are devoted to the administration of the *Wakuf*, the Moslem charitable institutions.

Entering the *hammam*, we pass into a big square anteroom, in the centre of which is a very old stone fountain from which the water bubbles con-

tinually. To the right through a door is the *hammam* itself, a large square room, with white marble floors and huge marble slabs, moist and warm, where the bathers wash and massage. The reposing-room, with its gaudy rug and divans, is picturesque and comfortable. All is spotlessly clean.

There are several women resting in the reposing-room as we pass through, reclining indolently on the cushions, drinking Turkish coffee, and thoroughly enjoying their weekly outing. For it is a great event every time, this bath, when not only the body but also the head is thoroughly washed, and friends meet to gossip and discuss all the household events.

How fond the Arabs are of feasts! Besides the religious holidays they hold great rejoicings, accompanied by interminable meals, at births, circumcisions,¹ marriages; and although at funerals the rejoicing is turned into mourning, the "meal" is none the less a highly important feature of the ceremony. When a son is born there is great joy. The *lemtualed*, or new-born child, lies in the monumental Arab bed, while all the relations and friends come to congratulate the parents. On all sides is heard the word *mabronck* ("good luck"). But no Christian eye must light on the child

¹ Circumcision among the Arabs takes place at the age of ten years (*vide Tunis la Blanche*, by Myriam Harry).

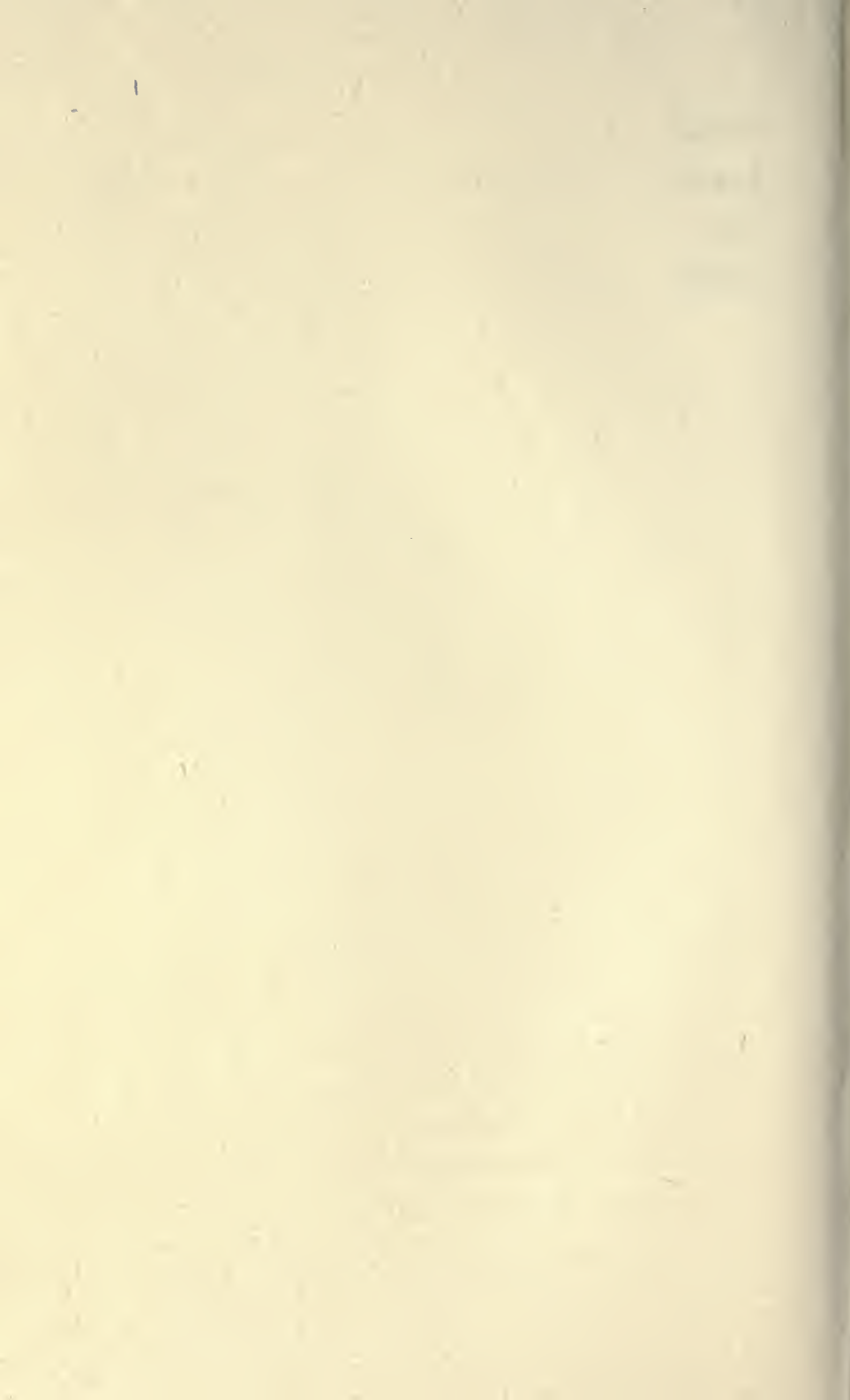
or it would be anything but *mabronck* for him. Seven days after the birth all—men and women—assemble in opposite sides of the house for a monster banquet. The apartments are richly decorated, while outside on the balcony and in the courtyard musicians make merry with the *num*, a sort of harp, the *hud*, or native mandolin, beat the *darbouka*, and clash the loud cymbals—so soothing for the poor *lemtualed*! The jubilation, accompanied by the singing of Arab songs, which are sometimes specially composed for the occasion, goes on from morn till eve. Then all leave, the shrouded women shuffle home, and silence descends once more on the house of the new-born. Forty days later the same feast takes place, so that the infant gets a good start in life, with plenty of well-wishers.

The following is one of the favourite Arab songs to celebrate the birth of a son :—

“ Su ! Su ! Su ! Sea-breezes fly to the fruitful palm-gardens,
 The birds with their striped wings whisper love songs.
 Rejoice ! Rejoice ! A warrior is born with the eye of an
 eagle
 And the courage of a tiger !
 May Allah’s opaline heaven protect him with its light
 blue curtain.
 Glory to his prolific mother.
 Honour to his proud father.
 Rejoice ! Rejoice ! Sing ! Dance ! ” †

† See Vincenzo Menghi, “ Le altre rive d’Italia.”

**MORE
ABOUT
THE
ARABS**





AN ARAB BEAUTY.

CHAPTER XI

MORE ABOUT THE ARABS

Arab weddings—Strange bridal customs—After the wedding-day—
Some Bedouin marriage customs—The blow of the *tellik*—
Customs at Arab funerals—“*Barca fecum*”—Lamentations of
the women—“*Maktub*”

ARAB weddings *begin* on Monday; that is to say, the first preparation commences on that day, when the bridegroom sends to the house of the bride the canopy under which she will walk in state on the following Thursday to his home. Along with this, if he be rich, he sends her a sack full of leaves of the henna plant, so much in use among the Arab women for toilette purposes, also two or three lambs, much oil and grain—in fact, everything necessary for the marriage feast for the women, which takes place in the bride's house. Musicians playing the tom-tom and the *zummarā* (pipes) accompany the gifts. Then a quaint ceremony takes place. The bride, covered with a rich silk *barracan*, and held by two women attendants, who grasp her

firmly on either side of the waist, advances stiffly and solemnly, preceded by a third, who walks backwards, holding a looking-glass in front of the bride's face so that she must gaze into it as she walks. When she reaches the sack of henna, still with the utmost solemnity, she sits down upon it seven times in succession, to bring good fortune to her future home. This is a very ancient custom, never omitted on the Monday. On Tuesday, the henna-leaves having been crushed by the women, the paste is put on the head of the bride, and a little on her hands. Then she remains seated while her women and girl friends gather round her. Each in turn places her hand on the bride's head, extolling her many virtues, saying how charitable she has been, how generous, that she has given oil and bread and clothes to the poor, etc. Whether true or not is of the least importance. On Wednesday evening her hands are covered with henna, the whole of the palms, and the back of the hand as far as the knuckles, so that they look almost black. The feet are treated in the same way, the whole of the soles, and the rest of the foot in the shape of a shoe.

Thursday is the great day; now, after these ceremonies, after all sorts of preparations and much feasting with her friends, the actual marriage-day arrives. In the morning the bride takes a

most elaborate bath, and is perfumed with rich, strange Oriental scents, those heavy, intoxicating essences dear to the Eastern nature. At six o'clock in the evening she is taken in procession, under the canopy, to the house of the bridegroom. Before entering the room where she will be attired for the marriage, she stops outside the door to throw and break an egg against the top of the lintel. As soon as she gets inside the room she breaks a jar of water, both old customs, to bring good luck. The women dress her in fine silk clothes, with many gold ornaments, and a rich silk *barracan*, all provided by the bridegroom. As a matter of fact, only two or three of the rich gold bracelets and so on are *given*, the rest being hired by the bridegroom for the occasion.

The bride is then left seated in the room, covered with a great piece of silk or cloth, all over her head and hiding her entirely from view. By this time her women and girl friends have all arrived and are feasting and rejoicing in one of the rooms. Now the bridegroom, who in the meantime has been to prayer in the mosque, comes to his house, accompanied by all his friends, singing and making merry. They all go into a separate room to feast, leaving the happy man to enter alone into the room where his shrouded wife awaits him. Each places a piece of sugar

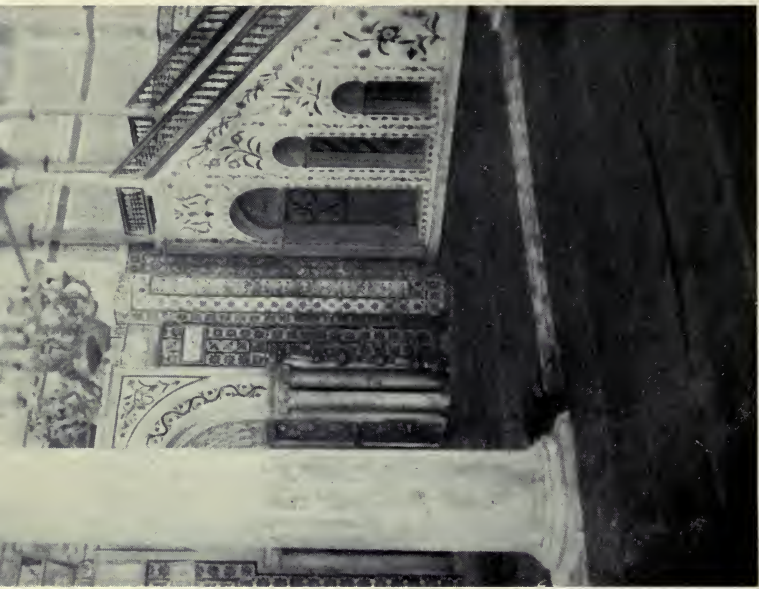
between the lips of the other, as a symbol of the sweetness of the married life which lies before them, and the bridegroom offers his bride a gift of jewellery or gold coins. The guests remain till late in the night, very often till the next morning. Endless feasting and music entertain them, for the Arabs have an extraordinary capacity for enjoying both for hours and hours at a time.

For seven days afterwards the bride, richly dressed, receives innumerable visits from her friends. Really this is the time of her life, and she makes the most of it. On the seventh day she offers them all yet once again a great feast. After another forty days they come once more to eat at her house; then the wedding festivities are really at an end.

All these customs are in vogue also among the Bedouin Arabs, but they have one or two in addition which are rather interesting and amusing. For instance, the Bedouin bridegroom on his wedding-day, must make his bride a present of a silk handkerchief filled with nuts, sweetmeats, little sugar cakes, and marzipan, also five silver rings for her fingers. An old pair of *tellik* (Arab shoes) are purposely placed in the room in which the lovers meet. He seizes one shoe, and she the other, and whichever of them can hit the other first will be the ruler



ARAB WOMEN AT THE WELL.



THE MEHRAB IN THE GURGI MOSQUE.

of the household after. This is looked upon as an unfailing sign, and there *may* be something in it.

For seven days after the wedding the bridegroom enjoys himself, wandering through the gardens of the oasis, doing no work, always accompanied by a group of his friends. But on the seventh day he must keep a sharp look-out, for on that day his friends will try suddenly to play a trick on him. If he escapes them, well and good; then he can run to his house and be safe. If not, they snatch his clothes from him and beat him, which seems a poor return for the feasting and entertainment. But it is custom, and that is the law of the Medes and Persians to these people, who will not omit the smallest ceremony handed down to them by their forefathers.

The followers of the Prophet are forbidden by the law to display grief by loud cries or lamentations, but human nature is too strong. When death has taken away some member of the family circle the relations vent their feelings in loud shrieks and shrill cries of "Uh! Uh! Uh!" that weird cry of the women which makes one shudder to hear at night ringing out through the still air. The female relatives scratch their faces and necks till the blood runs. I have seen a Bedouin woman three days after the death of her child with the

dried blood still on her face and neck, 'as these marks are not to be washed away till long afterwards.

All night long the lamentations continue, accompanied by the beating of sticks upon a small table or chest which has belonged to the deceased. Until the hired mourners arrive some near relation records the many virtues of the dead, or describes the personal attractions:—

“Her eyes were soft as the eyes of a gazelle,
Her skin as alabaster,
Her hair as the mane of a lion!
Return once more to rejoice the earth.”¹

In a paroxysm of grief the mourners throw themselves on the ground, wound themselves yet deeper, tearing out their hair by the roots, while their clothes are reduced to rags. They seem insensible to pain when worked up to this state of mental anguish.

The body, after being most scrupulously washed and anointed, and dressed in a long white shroud of linen, is placed in a coffin shaped like a great chest. The day after death it is taken to the cemetery. Nothing particular marks the procession, save that the relays of the bearers are continually changed on the way, as it is a great favour to be able to assist in this act of piety. No Mussulman may be buried in a coffin, so the

¹ See Vincenzo Menghi, “Le altre rive d'Italia.”

chest is given to the poor after the funeral. I once attended an Arab funeral in Tunisia. It was that of a woman, and I watched the ceremony at a little distance, seated on a tomb. After the short service, consisting of a passage from the Koran, and the blessing had been said, and after the filling in of the grave, most of the relations left the cemetery, only a few women remaining behind. The cemetery, a vast open space outside the walls of the city, was more picturesque than most of these, to our ideas, desolate-looking places. The whole of the space in between the graves was covered with bright yellow flowers, which lent a brilliant touch of colour to the scene. Here and there groups of veiled women bent over a tomb, while in the distance the white city gleamed in the afternoon sun.

Most of the graves were insignificant rectangular mounds, but now and then a more important tomb of stone marked the resting-place of the head of a family.

After the arrival a curious ceremony took place. All the male relatives stood in a row against a wall near the cemetery while the friends passed in turn before the line of mourners. I was eagerly invited to join the procession, and did so, saying to each man in turn "*Barca fecum*," which means something to this effect, "He [or she] is dead, but I hope *you* will have a long life."

The mourning of the women continues at the house of the bereaved for some days after the funeral. It is a painful sight to watch. The afflicted wife or mother receives visits from all her acquaintances, and each woman, as she enters the room, pushes violently through the crowd of sympathizers standing near, rushes to the poor soul, and falls on her neck, shrieking in anguish. Both rock to and fro, from side to side, holding each other in a tight grasp until they attain to a perfect frenzy of grief. At last the visitor loosens her hold of the mourner, who staggers against the wall or into a seat, exhausted by the intense emotion. This continues each time a new friend appears on the scene. The near relations are the most importunate in their demands on the unfortunate woman. It is really agonizing for her, and it seems a marvel that she retains her reason.

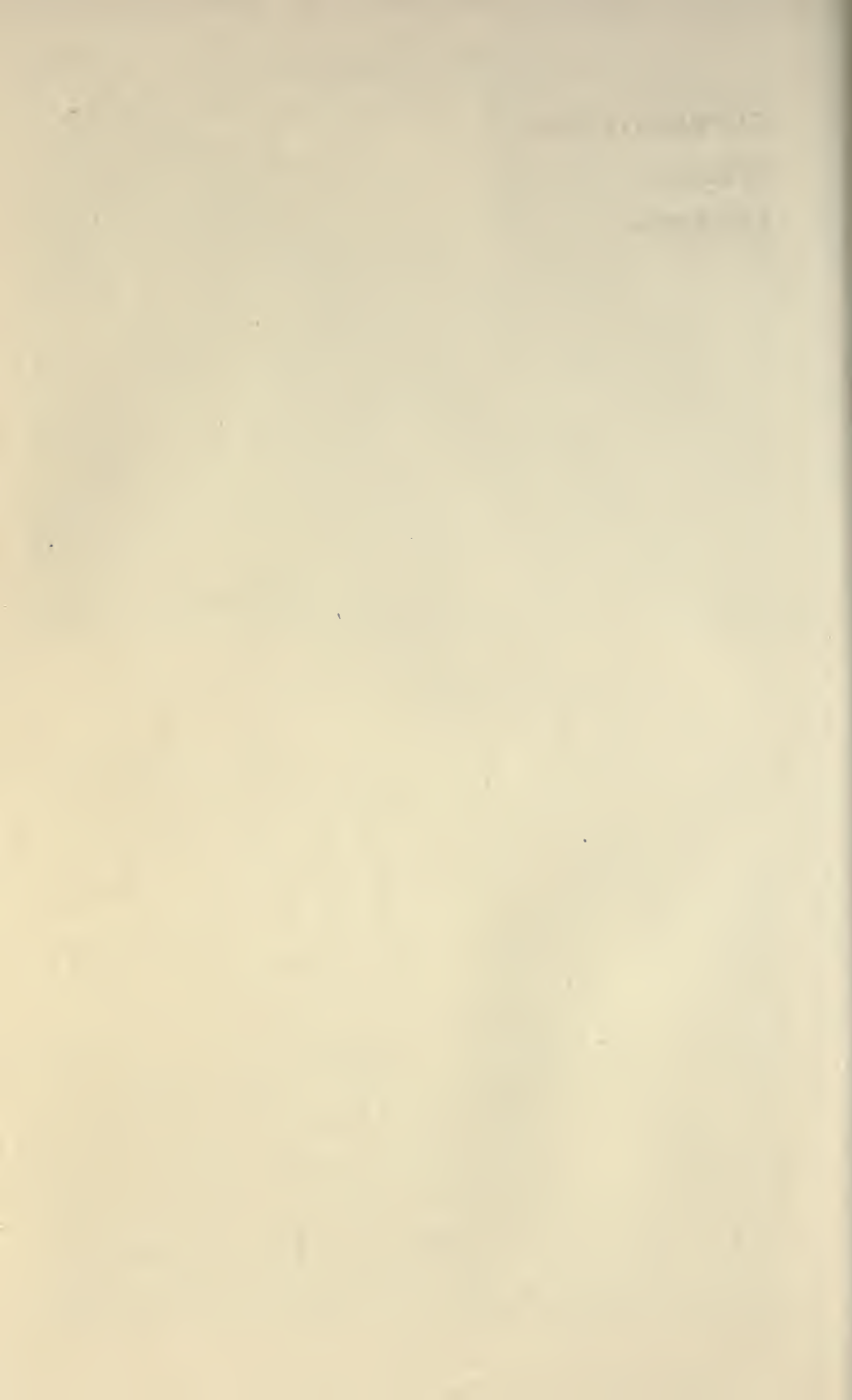
This manifestation of grief is confined to the women. The men, outwardly at least, are very calm and resigned, for the Arab, like all Mussulmans, is a fatalist. When the effect of the impression caused by the funeral of his relative has passed off he resumes his work, in the evening sits down to smoke his *narghileh* and to contemplate in his thoughtful mind "*Maktub*"—the will of Allah!



THE MOSQUE OF FESCHLUM.



AT THE DOOR OF HIS HOUSE.



**SUPERSTITIONS,
SPELLS,
LEGENDS**

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CHAPTER XII

SUPERSTITIONS, SPELLS, LEGENDS

Spells against a drought—How to cure a withering tree—The superstition of the lizard—Spells used by a first wife against her rival—Potions against sickness—A love-spell—Legend of the robber.

THE Arabs in Tripolitania have some quaint superstitions in which they place implicit faith. Many have to do with the rainfall, which here, as in all Eastern countries, is of the first importance. If there should be a drought, or delay in the coming of the eagerly looked for gathering of rain-clouds, they believe that by fasting two days during the week they will propitiate Allah and thus obtain their water supply.

In the time of the Turks, some seven years ago, when there was a severe drought, a deputation of Arabs waited on the then Turkish Governor to implore him to help them. This he did in the following manner. Going to one of the principal wells in the district, he took off his shoes and walked barefoot up and down the slope of the well, leading the cow whose work it was to draw the water.

History does not say whether this act of piety had the desired effect, but at any rate the people were comforted—and that is much.

The following superstition is curious. If a tree shows signs of withering the Arabs take the heads of three sheep, with the wool still on, and burn them at the foot of the tree. This is supposed to produce fresh sap and vigour.

The harmless lizard is responsible for another strange fancy. Should a woman after the birth of her child be unable to nourish it sufficiently, and her husband reproaches her with the fact, she will in all probability reply that a lizard has touched her breasts, thus drying up the milk. The husband will be quite satisfied with this explanation, as he dreads the witchcraft of the lizard!

The Berbers have another plan for obtaining a rainfall by scooping out great holes in the sand, which they fill with leathern bags, each bag containing a "thousand stones." (The Arab always says a *thousand* when he wishes to convey to your mind the idea of numbers.) The following are some of the spells and potions in use among the Arabs and negroes alike. They are so naïve that it must need a good deal of faith on the part of the evil-wisher to help the matter along.

When a husband takes a second wife, the first wife is very often jealous of her, and if of an

evil disposition, sets to work to get the husband away from the influence of number two wife by means of a spell. The *vghi* (witch doctor) is called in. He takes a white plate, writing on it some evil wish against the luckless woman. (Generally this wish takes the form of a desire that she shall never give birth to a son.) Wife number one puts on to this plate some food for the other, so that the latter in eating from the plate imbibes as it were the evil thought, and I am assured that the spell is frequently successful.

Sometimes this wish, instead of being written on a plate, is put on paper, sewn into a little leather bag, and stitched by the intriguing wife into the husband's clothes, that he may come to hate the second wife. So much for the "matrimonial spell."

There are others dealing with illness. A man was once very ill with sickness and intense pains. Doctors could do nothing for him, so the *vghi* was sent for. He very soon announced that he had "found written in a book" that a friend (*sic*) had done the following bad turn to the patient. He had cut his toe-nails, strung them on a thread, and put them into a dish of food which had subsequently been eaten by the sick man. Now he was suffering from the effects. The *vghi* wrote some cabalistic signs on a white plate, washed it, and made the patient swallow the water. This treatment he repeated for seven days. On the seventh

the man was violently sick, the thread and its appendages reappeared, and all was well.

Sometimes the spell is written on a piece of paper and burnt, the smoke being inhaled up the nostrils. This process is vouched for as having cured a young Arab of madness when all else failed. The *vghi* demanded 100 francs (£4) for the performance, threatening that if the sum were not paid on the day the cure was finished the youth would be immediately sent mad again. My informant assured me that the man was entirely cured, and after paying the money instantly left the country, which certainly proved he possessed some sense at the time anyway. One more—a love potion this time. An Arab girl, young and beautiful, fell in love with a handsome Arab whom she had seen by chance from the window of her house. The old woman messenger, such as exists in every Arab household, managed the affair, carrying messages to and fro. But the man was backward in pressing his suit; perhaps the "dot" was insufficient. At length the girl, to speed matters on, sent for the *vghi*, by means of whose spells she won the affection of the man her heart desired. The *vghi*, however, warned her that the spell would only last a certain time. They were married and for a time all went well, the husband appearing to be devoted to his wife. Suddenly, at the end of two years, the "spell" ceased to



THE VCHI AT WORK.

work—its power was gone and with it the husband's love! He tired of her and took a second wife. Now the first one is dreaming of spells which shall oust her rival. Such is Arab life.

The following story was told me as being "perfectly true," by a very old Arab woman who came to see me one day, and who related marvellous tales much like those in the "Thousand and One Nights."

Once, one hundred and fifty years ago, before the time of the Turks, a rich Arab of high rank passed a beautiful Jewess in the street. He fell in love with her and said, "You are beautiful—you please me. Come to my house and live with me." But she refused, answering, "No; I am a true woman. I love my husband." Then he continued, "Give me a hair of your head as a remembrance." So she went into the house and took a long hair out of the sieve (these are often made of long hairs from the tail of a horse or cow) and gave it to him. In the night she and her husband were awakened by the noise of the sieve, which was bounding round the room and beating against the door. When they opened the door the sieve rolled out, away to the house of the Arab, who opened his gate with joy. But when he saw the sieve he knew that his spells had been in vain, for none are strong enough to break down a woman's love.

The same old Arab woman also told this story or legend, which has such a delightful moral that it must be included here.

Long ago, before the Turks came to Tripoli, there was a robber who went to the house of a rich Arab of high family, well known in the city, to see what he could steal. But the Arab discovered him, and instead of being angry, invited him to stay and eat with him and his family.

“What!” exclaimed the astonished man. “Shall I then eat with you? I am a robber.” All the same they gave him to eat of *kous-kous* and meat till he could eat no more. Then the Arab asked him not to rob again as he would find food from Allah. So every evening after he went to bed satisfied, as he begged for charity and found plenty. One evening he went to ask alms of a rich merchant, who only gave him half a carrot. At this the man became angry, saying, “I will become a robber once more and take from him all that he has.” So he concealed himself in the house of the merchant and saw where he had hidden his keys. Then he wrote on a piece of paper, “I am the son of the Sultan and all that is here is mine.” He took a fine dress such as the Sultans wear and filled all the pockets with gold. Then he took a sack of coral and a great lot of tobacco and cigarettes. After which he began to smoke and enjoy himself. But in the mer-

chant's room, where he and his wife slept, they smelt the smoke, and said one to the other, "Who, then, is here?" When they found him they sent for the police, but the robber gave the police gold from his pockets and they went away. More police came, but he sent them away with more gold. At last the Pacha came. The robber told him that he was the son of the Sultan, and again remarked, "All here is mine." So the Pacha took him to his own house with great rejoicing, and in due time gave him his daughter in marriage. After he was married he went and took the house of the merchant who had offered him half a carrot to eat, with all his riches, putting him and his wife in a poor little house near the Arab cemetery outside the city, saying to them, "Another time you will be careful not to let the poor weep in vain."

**THE
HARA, OR
JEWISH
QUARTER**

CHAPTER XIII

THE HARA, OR JEWISH QUARTER

The Ghetto on Friday morning—Woman's work—Schools for boys
—Home for old men—School for girls—Curious customs—
Service in the synagogue—Women's dress.

THE Jewish population in Tripoli numbers about 15,000, and is a very important factor. It is an interesting quarter to visit, there being so much to see, also, especially on Friday, so much movement and animation. On that day every one is out buying the provisions for the following day, their Sunday, which is most strictly observed. We are told the best time to go is in the morning, so about ten o'clock we turn our steps in the direction of the Hara-el-Kebira, chief "shopping centre" of the quarter. Although no distance from our hotel, being only about five minutes' walk, it is really like entering another world to walk through this serried mass of human beings, in their gay-coloured garments and red fezzes, moving perpetually up and down the narrow street between the brilliant heaped-up

masses of fruit and vegetables, the sweet-shops with their tempting pink and white displays, and the hundred and one other necessaries and food-stuffs which find a place in this "High Street" of the Jews. They are nearly all men, these buyers, as the women are mostly at home preparing the dinner for the next day. With difficulty we push our way out of the crowded thoroughfare into one of the quiet streets beyond, passing the door of a large courtyard where a group of women are thus engaged. Such a picture they make in their work-a-day clothes, striped skirt, loose white or coloured chemisettes, and purple or blue silk handkerchiefs knotted round their heads. A little farther on an old woman beckons us into another courtyard. Here we find a group of very old women, squatting in a circle on the ground, washing the glass vessels which are used in the synagogues for lighting purposes. One old dame says that if I want to live long and be happy I must rinse out one of these and throw the water into a pan standing near. So, of course, I do it, amidst murmurs of approval from the group. This cleansing of the lamps of the synagogues is performed every Friday morning by the old women of each congregation. Once a year, at Easter, the "old maids" of the congregation do all the washing and cleaning of the synagogues, a sort

of vow or sacrifice, by which they hope to obtain husbands.

In the Slad-el-Sroussi we see a school for poor boys, which is entirely maintained by charity. Near the door just inside is an enormous "crib" full of loaves of bread to be distributed among the boys at mid-day. About 550 of them, many orphans and all very poor, are fed, clothed, and given a good education free of charge.

Turning down a narrow little street, we meet an excited old woman, who asks us what we are doing; for it is rather unusual to have European visitors in this quarter. When we explain she becomes quite friendly, inviting us to follow her up a narrow staircase, while assuring us we shall see something very interesting.

So up we go, to find ourselves in a long, low-roofed room. On the floor, round against the walls, are seated a number of old men, many very venerable. They seem perfectly happy, some reading, others smoking, the greater number doing nothing at all. This is the Slad-el-Lherfa, a home for old men too poor to support themselves. Here they are fed and can remain all day. A very fine-looking old fellow with a long white beard, seated before a low table on which is an enormous Hebrew Old Testament, offers to say a prayer for us. Having given him our names, he recites a long prayer, in which from

time to time all the rest join with immense fervency. It is interesting, but a trifle embarrassing. When it is over we have a short conversation with the old gentleman, who tells us that his prayer was "very good, perhaps too good," with which remark I entirely agree upon being informed that the theme thereof had been "that my family should be as the sands of the seashore."

We depart amid the benedictions of all, leaving a small gift "for the good of the house."

Many of the synagogues are used on weekdays as schools for boys. Entering one unexpectedly, we see a number of "tinies," all apparently having a very good time, as the old schoolmaster (he must have been at least seventy) is dozing peacefully. Not so in the other schools, where the bigger boys are hard at work.

In the Suk-el-Harrara we visit a French Jewish school for girls, one of the many branches of the Alliance Israelite. Of the 250 pupils, those who show the greatest aptitude are trained as teachers.

The schoolhouse must have been originally some old Arab palace, and shows traces of great beauty. The seventh-century faience tiles, pierced white stucco decoration, and marble columns are all remarkable.

In one of the synagogues we noticed little

rooms partitioned off. These exist only in three or four of the Jewish churches. Here, at midnight, members of the congregation who have made a vow, perhaps of gratitude for recovery from illness or for the safety of a child, come to pray. They remain till the morning, praying and reciting the Psalms of David, *every night of their lives*. In this same synagogue a man is sitting at work examining the *Tora* (Holy Book). Every Friday morning he goes over that portion of Scripture to be read in the next day's service with a sharp-pointed instrument, while if there is a tiny dot or stroke missing in any letter he puts it in, it being a sin in the Jewish religion to read any word that is not perfect.

The next day, Saturday, the Jews' Sabbath, we go to morning service in the synagogue. There are twenty synagogues in the Jewish quarter, thirteen large and seven small. In many there is no special accommodation for the women, but in a few, more modern, there is a women's gallery. There is one in the synagogue we visit, but the women are conspicuous by their absence, only three quite old Jewesses being present. There are plenty of men, mostly in Jewish costume—white shirts with full sleeves, full white trousers, short, bright-coloured, embroidered coatees, and red fezzes—but some in ordinary

European dress. All wear a sort of white shawl or scarf over their heads and shoulders, called the *tallet*.

The service has begun, and as we enter small boys are intoning in nasal cadence verses of the Psalms. In the centre of the synagogue is a raised dais or square pulpit, on which are the Rabbis, the Chief Rabbi a fine-looking old man with long white beard. The *Tora* has not yet been brought out from the locked and richly curtained recess in the wall in which it is kept. These Holy Books, the Old Testament written on parchment, are kept in tall cylindrical cases of filagree silver or carved wood. Just before the one containing the portion of Scripture to be read at this morning's service is carried in, the sacristan, a tall, bearded man in Jewish dress, walks round and round the synagogue, calling out in a loud voice, asking which members of the congregation wish to read from the *Tora* that morning. The privilege is much coveted, and is "bid for" by various men, like a sort of auction, the highest bidders being chosen. The descendants of the families of Cohen and Levi, who claim descent from the ancient High Priests of the Tabernacle, have the right to read first and second respectively without payment.

The presentation of the *Tora* is very impressive. As it is carried in its silver case, the congregation press forward to touch it, or even to kiss



TYPES OF JEWESSES.

it as it passes. Then the Rabbi takes it, and raising it high above his head, shows it in succession to all four sides of the synagogue amid a deep silence.

At the end of the service, before the Benediction is pronounced, the women leave the gallery. When I ask one of them the reason she replies, "It is not fit that women should remain."

The dress of the Jewish women and girls on the Sabbath is particularly picturesque and attractive. The high pointed head-dress common in Tunis is not worn in Tripoli; instead, all wear a silk handkerchief, very often bordered with gold coins, which hangs down at the back of the head, well on to the shoulders. They wear snowy-white chemisettes with full sleeves, little embroidered velvet zouaves, crimson, blue, or heliotrope, bordered with silver or gold galon, and striped skirts of many colours. There is a great display of jewellery, nearly always a necklace of large gold coins, generally Austrian double ducats, each piece worth about £2 in English money. Massive gold or silver bracelets of intricate design are worn only on the arms, as the fashion of wearing anklets has gone out among the Jewesses. Then there are great gold brooches to fasten the chemisettes, with often beautiful gold ornaments for the head, worn at each side of the handkerchief. Many of the younger women and girls are extremely

handsome, and it is a joy for the eye to see a group of them gossiping together in one of the old courtyards, with their wonderful blue walls, which abound in Tripoli.

A
JEWISH
WEDDING

CHAPTER XIV

A JEWISH WEDDING

Ceremonies beforehand—Dressing the bride—Passive attitude of the bride—Musicians—Procession of the bride—The service—The glass of wine—"Good luck" to the couple.

JEWISH weddings always take place on a Wednesday, and for a week beforehand there is much visiting and interchange of civilities between the respective families of the bride and bridegroom. The former holds a reception of all her friends, married women as well as girls, while the bridegroom does likewise for his acquaintances. The ceremony takes place in the bridegroom's house, the bride going there to be dressed in all her finery by her friends and relations. For several days before the wedding she goes through great toilette preparations; washing and elaborately perfuming the hair, staining her hands with henna, so that the finger-tips look almost black, complete submersion under water, seven times in succession, as a symbol of the purification from all sin, are some of the preliminaries.

We have been invited to a wedding, and arriving about four o'clock in the afternoon, find many of the guests already assembled. The women are all seated in the great square *patio*, rows and rows of them in picturesque dresses of many colours, or shrouded in their white silk *barracans*. In the centre is a raised dais, like a throne, draped with crimson velvet embroidered in silver, having a high canopy of silk. This is for the bridal couple. In front is a little table covered with a white cloth, standing on a carpeted vacant space. This is where the Rabbis, two in number, will presently take up their position. The gallery upstairs is full of male guests, while on one side sit the musicians, tambourine, violin, and *darbouka*, the Arab tom-tom. Having been invited to go and see the bride, who is being attired in a room at the back of the gallery, I find her seated on a chair, fully dressed, save for the bridal veil, surrounded by women and girls, all friends and relations. Her dress is of rich white silk, with coloured sleeves. She wears many heavy gold ornaments, among them a massive girdle which holds the voluminous folds about her waist. She is very young, only just sixteen, now the usual age at which Jewish girls marry—formerly they were often married as young as fourteen. She is absolutely passive. Not once during the whole ceremony does she move a muscle of her face, or evince the slightest sign of interest in the proceedings. This is,

I believe, a highly correct line of conduct, showing that she is not of a frivolous nature. One of the girl friends lifts up her hand to clasp a massive gold bracelet round the wrist. It falls again into her lap like a dead weight. She is bidden by another to stand up so that the folds of the veil which is now being adjusted may fall correctly. She does so, and stands, mute and motionless, till told to sit down once more.

Meanwhile the guests have been arriving in numbers and the whole house is full. The musicians are hard at work, the *darbouka* man in particular making himself well heard. The moment having arrived, the bride is led forth, between her father and father-in-law, preceded by two small, excited girls carrying huge lighted candles.

They pass through the crowded gallery, down the staircase into the thronged courtyard below. Here the bride is joined by the bridegroom, who is about twenty-seven or twenty-eight years of age, and, unlike the bride, is taking an immense interest in all the proceedings, being much *en évidence*. Together they seat themselves on the dais. The immediate relations on both sides then take their places on chairs close to the couple, and the service begins. The two Rabbis, in their dark blue turbans and white robes, stand just in front of the happy pair, close to a little table on which

are a vase of jasmine, a carafe of red wine, and a glass. After the Chief Rabbi has recited some verses of prayer he takes the vase, inhales the perfume of the blossoms, and hands it to the bridegroom, who follows suit, afterwards raising the bride's veil so that she can also enjoy the rich scent of the "marriage flower."

After further prayers the ring is handed to the bridegroom by the Rabbi, to be placed by him on the first finger of the bride. In this case the ring is unfortunately too small, refusing to go beyond the first joint of the henna-stained finger. Some amusement is caused among the guests, but *she* remains as immovable as ever while the ring is forcibly pushed on to her finger. Finally the Rabbi pours out a glass of the wine, tastes it, then passes it to the husband, who, after drinking from it himself, offers it to his wife. This concludes the ceremony. All those who can do so make a point of drinking from this same glass, to bring good luck to the couple, after which the bridegroom breaks the glass by throwing it on the ground. In the excitement of the moment the sister of the bridegroom, who is seated on the dais close to him, collapses with her chair, off the platform into the lap of the lady seated just below, causing the latter much pained surprise. Every one laughs except the bride, who is incapable of mirth.

Now great trays are brought in, piled up with slabs of cake, macaroons and sweetmeats, marzipan, coffee and cocoa. Every one is talking, the musicians meanwhile vying with each other to see who shall make the most noise. It is very hot, and we think it is time to make a move. The *patio* is a blaze of colour. Some of the dresses are lovely, purple and gold, pink embroidered with black, yellow, white striped with lilac, flower patterns on a white ground. Then the head-dresses, silk handkerchiefs of every imaginable colour—bright rose, purple, blue, magenta, lilac, or patterned on a light ground. It is like a flower garden seen from above.

With difficulty we push our way round the gallery, down the staircase, and through the crowd below, to wish "good luck" to the happy couple, who still sit in state on the dais. The bride is motionless as ever, like a stuffed figure, and one would really feel sorry for the bridegroom were it not for the fact that we know he understands and appreciates her correct behaviour.

So we leave them—our hands full of cakes and sweets—with the best of wishes.



A
JEWISH
TRIBUNAL

CHAPTER XV

A JEWISH TRIBUNAL

Office of Chief Rabbi—Scenes at the Tribunal—Interesting case—
Jewish funerals—Customs by the graveside—Widow's public
grief—The cemetery.

THE Jewish Tribunal is very interesting and full of "local colour." To watch the administration of this court, just the same to-day as it has been for centuries, makes one realize the extraordinary tenacity of the race. On the way to the Tribunal we pass the office of the Head Rabbi, where his secretary is at work. Here only questions of marriage and "dot" are dealt with, all the Jewish marriage contracts being drawn up and signed from this bureau.

We reach the Tribunal about 10.30, when we are invited to take our seats on the bench next to the Head Rabbi and his "chancellor," the second Rabbi, whose work is, as it were, to "back up" the chief. The latter is a very fine type of judge, with refined, ascetic features, wearing the white robes and blue turban with great dis-

inction. At a table on the right-hand side of the room sits the clerk, while upon benches round against the walls men are waiting their turn to plead their cause, or, it may be, interested observers of the proceedings. From time to time they join in the conversation or arguments, silence in the court not being strictly observed.

The atmosphere is rather oppressive and the flies distinctly trying, but these trifles are forgotten in the interest of watching the proceedings. The grievances are mostly of a domestic character, but such questions as the division of legacies and property are also dealt with. The courtyard outside is full of people who are interested in those inside—and we are thankful they are so at a distance.

The first two cases we hear are not particularly exciting, but the third shows vividly enough the archaic state of Jewish family life in Tripoli. Here the Jews still live according to the ancient law of Moses, which permits a man to take a second wife if the first has had no children at the end of ten years' married life.

As the court clears at the end of a case concerning division of property a family party take their places on the bench before the Rabbi, a man with three women, his two wives and his mother.

The first wife, her *barracan* drawn over her

head, takes up her position at the extreme end of the bench, remaining there during the whole of the proceedings without speaking one word or showing by any sign that she is more than a spectator of the affair. A little farther along sits the second wife. She has an interesting, intelligent face, but is evidently a bit of a shrew, for there are lines of temper about her mouth, her forehead is drawn into a pucker of frowning lines, while it is clear she has come with the determination not to be talked down. Next to her is the mother-in-law, who is an immensely important factor in both Jewish and Arab households—much too important for the peace of the domestic arrangements. She is a dignified, stout old lady, with a purple silk handkerchief knotted about her head and a voluminous *barracan* over her ample proportions. She has a wonderful command of language; not once during the business is she silent for more than a few seconds, and then only from want of breath. Beyond sits the husband, a good-looking, youngish man, evidently completely under his mother's thumb. He speaks very little during the pauses of her conversation, and generally only to the effect that what his mother says must be right.

The whole trouble is that the second wife will not leave the first wife in peace. She constantly taunts her with the fact that *she* has had a son,

whereas number one has not presented her lord and master with offspring. She goes farther still. According to the mother-in-law she beats the whole family, husband included, and it is to check this tendency that they have at last brought her before the Tribunal. If this upsetting element in the house cannot be induced to give up this evil habit, then the husband must divorce her. She and her mother-in-law have the discussion all to themselves, both talking at once, as the son is plainly terrified. The first wife moves no muscle of her face; she might be asleep, only that now and then a faint flicker of a contented smile passes over her features. At *last* she is revenged for the countless taunts and slights which her childless condition has brought upon her. It is an interesting psychological study. The Chief Rabbi listens in absolute silence, occasionally passing his hand meditatively over his mouth, his keen eyes and practised mind noting every detail. The second Rabbi from time to time says a few words to him, which he answers by a brief movement of his head. Finally he speaks, and as the two women cease simultaneously we realize *what* a noise they have been making. The decision is that they shall all return home and give the matter a further trial. If the second wife continues to beat the rest of the family, she must again appear before the Tribunal, and then she will be divorced.

As we walk down the narrow street leading from the Tribunal we pass a group of women. Among them are our three heroines, all eagerly discussing the affair with sympathizers, and from the tone of voice and excited gestures of number two wife we imagine it will not be very long before she again appears before the Tribunal.

The Jewish funerals are preceded by great lamentations and rending of garments. Hired women mourners assemble to give their high, piercing cries; they scratch their faces and necks, beat their breasts, and knock their heads against the stones of the floor. The corpse is placed in the coffin as soon as possible after the laying out, the nostrils, eyes, mouth, and ears being stopped with earth, and the body reposing on an open grid, which forms the bottom of the coffin, in order that it may touch the earth, thereby fulfilling literally the words "dust to dust."

After the lowering of the coffin the mourners gather round to throw the first shovelfuls of earth. Then, breaking a piece of gold into a thousand minute fragments, they throw them to the four points of the compass—so that the evil spirits, intent on catching the morsels of gold, will not seize upon the soul of the departed. For seven days afterwards the relations mourn. They go unwashed, do not change their clothes, sit on the bare earth and eat but little. It is customary for

a widow to go twice a week for a whole year to the cemetery, where she weeps loudly and laments on the grave of her dead husband. At the house of mourning all the beggars of the community are collected to be regaled with gifts of food on four separate occasions after the decease—viz., the sixth day, the thirtieth day, five and a half and eleven months. The Jewish cemetery lies outside the city walls in a direct line with the Bab Sjedid (New Gate), which is the entrance to the Hard. Thus they carry their dead straight out of the quarter to their last resting-place, after the short service of Psalms and benediction in the Slad Kebir, the Grand Synagogue. A truly remarkable people, these Jews of Tripoli. Preserving intact in every detail the religious and domestic customs handed down from generation to generation for centuries, intensely philanthropic among themselves, with most of the commercial power in their hands so far as the foodstuffs of the whole population of Tripoli is concerned, and bound together by the solidities of religion, they form a community within a community.

**THE TRUE
LIFE STORY
OF A NEGRESS**

CHAPTER XVI

THE TRUE LIFE STORY OF A NEGRESS

The negro races in Tripolitania—The Fezzanese—Curious phenomenon of the race—The Soudanese—Witch doctors—The *danga*.

SHE has come to-day to tell me the story of her life, this sad-faced woman. In her red and yellow *barracan* she makes a picture here in our little courtyard, with its black and white marble tiles and green walls. Her face lights up when I speak to her, and her smile shows her marvellous teeth in all their perfection. In repose her face is serious ; she has had little to do with the light side of life. But when she begins to talk how she changes ! For she talks with her whole body—head, hands, arms are all brought into play as she sways backwards and forwards, living over again the past. I have translated her story as literally as possible—hear what she has to say :—

I was born in Benghasi ; my name is Sasia. My father and mother came from Fezzan, a month's

journey on camels. My mother had six children, but they all died. So she made a vow that a Hebrew woman should bring her seventh child into the world, for then it would be allowed to live.¹ So it was done, and all went well. For seven years the Hebrew woman gave me all my clothes. After that time my mother gave me as a servant to an Arab family, because my father was dead, and we were poor. They beat me many times in the five years I was with them. But after these years were finished my mother promised me in marriage to a man whose father was a Berber and his mother a negress like me. I was married when I was fourteen. First my mother-in-law thought that when I came to her house that I had come as servant. But when she knew that I was the wife of her son, she tore her hair,² scratched her face, beat her breasts, and said, "What have they done to my son?" Then my husband, when he saw the anger of his mother, took a road away from us and left us. I was so young, not yet a woman, and they beat me, tore my hair, gave me hardly anything to eat, and made me do all the work of the house. I wept. I asked for food, for I was starving; instead, they beat me with a stick. I was so dirty that none

¹ This is a great concession on the part of an Arab woman or negress, for there is no love lost between them and the Jewish race.

² A sign of mourning.



TYPE OF NEGRESS.



NEGRESSES WASHING ON THE SEASHORE OF TRIPOLI,

would come near me. It was so for three years, and I went in rags, for my good clothes in which I had come to the house were hidden from me.

Then came the sister of my husband Arghila, and when she saw my state she wrote to him. She told him how my life was heavy to me, and that I would fain die. He left all to hasten back. I was tending the sheep. I saw him come, but I hid myself that he might not see my rags. But he recognized me and called me by my name, "Sasia! Sasia!" Then I cried for joy and called him, "My master! my master!" He was horrified at my filthy, neglected state. In haste he took the great water-skin from the back of his camel, and I washed myself. When I was clean I slept, for I was very weary. Arghila gave me some of his clothes to wear. He killed a kid while I slept, roasted the meat, and gave me to eat when I awoke. I said, "Let me go, for your mother will beat me because I do not return." When I reached the house she was angry. She saw the name of Arghila on his shirt which I was wearing.

"Where, then, have you stolen this?"

"It is Arghila, my master; he is here."

Then she said, "It is a lie!" and she beat me. But the father of my husband came and said, "Who, then, is weeping so bitterly?" So I told him all and we went together to the sister of my husband. Arghila was there and he was angry with a great

anger because they had left me hungry and beaten me. But they said, "He is the eldest son, and should have married a cousin of the family, and not a negress." But my husband arose in wrath and said, "I am a merchant of Alessandria. I am rich. I have camels and sheep. I will take my wife and go. We will see you no more." Then his mother hastened to fetch me a robe of silk. She hung many ornaments upon me, washed me with fine scents, and made much of me. So then Arghila was content and stayed with me in the house of his mother. For three months we were happy there. Then one night my husband said to me, "Take all your clothes, our mattresses, and our household goods." So we took them, placed them on the backs of camels, and escaped in the night to Derna. For my husband was wearied of the house of his mother. At Derna in our house was an old woman who took care of me, cooked our food, dressed and washed me. Now I rested, I grew in mind and body, I became a woman who began to think.

We stayed four years in Derna. Then we went to Wadi, near the Soudan. It was a long journey; we travelled for six months across the desert on our camels. After a happy year in Wadi, a son was born to us. My husband was wounded one day in the shoulder by an arrow, shot by chance by another Arab. Six months he lay ill. When he was well he bought a hundred negro slaves, Soudanese,

blacker than I am, and took them to sell in Alessandria. On the way we met a cousin, who, after we had given him food, and he had eaten with us, went into the town and told that some one was coming with a hundred slaves to sell. Swiftly a friend came running from the town to tell my husband that he must fly, for the police were coming to take him. Then all the slaves scattered and hid in a field of cotton. But the police took my husband and bound his hands. They said to me, "Go ; you are free with the other slaves." But I answered, "No ; I will not go. I am his wife. Here is our son in my arms." Then they took me with my husband to Alessandria. He was condemned to a year's imprisonment, but I was left free. They would have sent me to Benghasi, but I escaped by the way and with all the hundred slaves we took refuge in a great cave underground. Every day a friend came and fed us with food in buckets let down by ropes into the cave. But after a few days I went to live in the house of some friends. When the time came that my husband should be set free, I went to the place where the steamer comes in from Benghasi. I mingled with the crowd of Arabs who landed from the boat, so that the police should think that I too had come over the sea, then I went to the prison. Arghila was set free, and we returned to live with my mother-in-law in the desert. But after a year the family broke up. Each took his possessions and

went his way, and the tents were folded up. I was tired, for I had seen many things and travelled far, and I wished to see my mother.¹ So I left my husband and went to my mother in Benghasi. She did not recognize me, for I had changed much in the seven years since I left her. I cried to her, "I am Sasia!" but she would not believe me till she saw the scar on my forehead, which I had from a child. I stayed a year with her, then she found another husband for me. But I could not stay with him, for the life was hard. So after ten months I left him, and the law set us free. But with us it is a disgrace for a woman to live alone, so I married for the third time. Now I am sixteen years with this husband, and I am unhappy, very unhappy. He beats me—he gives me only rags to wear. All that I earn he spends in drinking. But I cannot leave him, for he will not set me free.

Poor Sasia! as she finishes her story, her face changes. She has been all animation, movement, fire. Now a mask, as it were, falls over her face. She sits motionless, gazing out in imagination over the desert. Her eyes fill with tears. I press a

¹ According to negro law divorce is very easy. If a husband wishes to divorce his wife he leaves her with all her clothes and the household goods, going out simply with his *barracan* wrapped round him. If the wife wishes to leave the husband, she does the same thing. Afterwards the case is decided by the Tribunal.

small gift into her hands as she rises to her feet. Slowly, sadly, she draws her *barracan* about her head, then she turns and leaves me.

There are two races of negro blood in Tripolitania—

(a) Those who come from Fezzan (on the southern frontier of Tripolitania).

(b) Those who come from the Soudan.

The Fezzanese are mulattoes (it is to this race that Sasia belongs), a cross-breed between the authentic negroes who emigrated to Fezzan from the torrid regions of Central Africa and the inhabitants of the north coast of Tripoli who went with the commercial caravans also to Fezzan, and found it convenient to settle among their new friends, who received them most hospitably—so hospitably indeed, that many a family on the north coast waited in vain for the return of a forgetful father or brother!

The Fezzanese are physically a strong race, well developed intellectually, and with a distinct leaning towards civilization. A curious phenomenon about these people may be interesting to note. When they leave Fezzan and come to the northern towns of Tripolitania, their skin changes and peels off, owing, it is thought, to the change of water, which is much sweeter in the north. They make devoted servants, and are often employed, the men as

“cavasses” or dragomen at the various Consulates, the women as house servants. They also do all the baking for the lower classes of Arabs.

The Soudanese are the real unmixed negro race, and always marry among themselves. The members of the different tribes recognize each other by the fine lines tattoed on the cheeks and forehead, which differ in number and shape according to the tribe. They shave their heads except for the *shinshea*, a long lock of hair by which, when they die, they expect to be drawn up to Paradise.

The men are generally of Herculean strength. You see them carrying loads that would break the back of any ordinary man, and for that reason they are generally employed as porters. Many practise witchcraft or magic of various kinds, and they have extraordinary skill therein if one can believe half the “results” that are told! Then they are also performers of the *danga*, or masked dance, which is often to be seen in the streets of Tripoli and Tunis, and which is doubtless familiar to travellers in the East. The mask is a weird creation, covering the head as well as the face, leaving slits for the eyes and mouth, and finished off with a tall feather or many tall feathers according to the taste and means of the dancer. The dress varies also for the same reasons, sometimes consisting chiefly of rags, sometimes most pretentious and gaudy. Richly embroidered jacket, gorgeous mask, and

spotlessly white pleated full skirts or petticoats reaching to the knees is the smart full dress for the performers, who spin round and round like tops till one is so giddy oneself as a looker-on that it seems impossible that they can remain on their feet. The more the spectators applaud the faster the dancers spin round, till it is like a maddening tarantula—all this to the accompaniment of tom-toms and the *sammara*, or reed pipe.

To-day we have been to “call on” Hadji Gogo, the “High Priestess” in Tripoli of a certain society or sect of Soudanese negroes and negresses (principally the latter) who call themselves the *boori*. The members of this society are subject to a sort of nervous illness which attacks them from time to time, and which they can also *induce*, so to speak, by working themselves up into a frenzy, very much like the sect of the Aï Sowar (an Arab sect), one of whose séances I attended once in Kairouan.

The *boori*, when under the influence of this frenzy, burn certain strong perfumes giving off odours which have a calming effect on the nerves. Under the direction of Hadji Gogo, wonderful and mysterious “dances” are given from time to time by the members of the society, generally at the period of some “feast” of their religion.

Hadji Gogo is a most remarkable personality. No one knows how old she is—she came from the Soudan when she was fifteen and has been in

Tripoli ever since, and she might be *any* age. We come to her house up a perfect maze of little streets, and find her reclining on cushions on the floor of her room, holding a sort of reception of several negresses who are paying her an afternoon call. We notice that they all treat her with the great respect and deference due to a leader. A spare figure, of middle height, dressed in a plain cotton gown, showing white full trousers underneath. A face full of character and energy; a manner which bespeaks independence and *pride* even. She greets us with great friendliness, and chairs are at once brought, as we do not like sitting on the ground, like every one else in the room. The room is fascinating, hung with brilliantly coloured stuffs, blue, magenta, rose-pink, coloured mats and cushions on the floor, and the walls coloured with a wonderful collection of bead necklaces, cowry ornaments, strings of amulets, muslin bags containing mysterious toys, clubs and instruments—a museum of curios, most of which are used in the dances, hung about the bodies of the performers. We have a long and interesting conversation, aided by an interpretress, over the coffee and cigarettes. Hadji Gogo talks to us in Arabic, but from time to time she speaks to her negress friends in *Houssa*, pure negro language. After a time we suggest that we should so much like to see the “church” where the religious ceremonies take



NEGRO DRUMMER BOYS OF THE MENSICIA SCHOOL,

place, and where many more mysterious relics are to be seen. A rather painful silence follows this request. Hadji Gogo coughs, and says she has such a bad cold it would be dangerous for her to step out of the room. We take the hint and bide our time. Then I offer the Hadji a gift for her "church." This works wonders. Rising, she beckons us across the courtyard, opens a door, and shows us a dim, mysterious room. All sorts of ornaments and objects hang on the walls, or are piled in great baskets on the floor. The use of these we can only dimly guess at; many are utterly unintelligible. To the right hangs a white sheet, cutting off a portion of the room. This looks so invitingly weird that one of the party, filled with unholy curiosity, moves in its direction to peer behind, but is hastily pulled back by the Hadji, whose watchful eye has been on the look out for any such departure. The whole room is curiously suggestive of unknown things, sealed mysteries to the uninitiated. But the door is shut again, and we say goodbye to Hadji Gogo and her visitors, a picturesque group in their gorgeous coloured *barracans*, the "Priestess" standing out in forceful contrast, so plainly dressed, but so obviously a *leader*.

**BEDOUIN
ENCAMPMENT
AT
BU-MELIANA**



CHAPTER XVII

BEDOUIN ENCAMPMENT AT BU-MELIANA

Reception by the army doctor in charge—Franciscan Sisters' work
—Girls' school—Gymnasium for boys—Dispensary—Bathing-
place—Fatma, the truant from school.

ABOUT twenty minutes' drive outside Tripoli, at Bu-Meliana (the wells of Meliana), is a large Bedouin encampment, under the control of the Italian Government. Here are between 1,600 and 1,800 Bedouins, among them about 200 negroes, mostly Soudanese. Very many of these people have lost the head of the family in the recent war. Here the Government has provided a home and food for those who are unable to work, together with medical attendance, education for the children, and other indispensable steps towards civilization. Sanitation and cleanliness, hitherto unknown to these poor wanderers of the desert, are conspicuous.

We are received at the entrance by an orderly who takes our permit to the officer in charge, Captain Dr. C——. The latter welcomes us with

the invariable courtesy we have never once failed to meet with in Tripoli, and we go round with him to view the encampment. It is divided into four sections, named after the cities of Rome, Milan, Torino, and Palermo. The streets of little tents are called after the Italian Royal Family, while the square out of which they branch is the Piazza di Progresso (Progress Place). The tents are the people's own, and oh! it *is* hot inside! I bravely crouch into one, for it is much too low to allow one to stand upright. Here are five women—two working at the hand-loom, weaving a cotton *barracan*, the other three taking it easy looking on, and telling those endless stories which the Arabs love. One, a veritable witch of *Macbeth*, with long, straggling, wiry hair, and wild black eyes, begins a storm of inquiries of a highly personal nature, but the others tell her in Bedouin language to shut up. All are most friendly, and would like me to stay and talk, but the heat is too much for me, so I beat a hasty retreat. Everything inside the tent is spotlessly clean, as, indeed, everywhere in the encampment.

There are very few men to be seen during the day, all having gone into the town to work, as porters or in the various construction works, etc., returning in the evening. The women fetch all the water supply from the town in the morning; one can see them coming along in picturesque groups

with the tins on their heads. Alas! those petroleum-tins! they are a sadly inartistic note, instead of the earthenware jars which harmonized so wonderfully with the women's dresses.

We come to the girls' school, where the teachers are three Franciscan Sisters, sweet and gentle, in their flowing robes. One of them is just giving a lesson on the sewing-machine to some of these small people, seated around her outside the school-house. The girls who attend the school are forty-five in number, their ages ranging from three to twelve. They are taught all kinds of needlework as well as ordinary lessons. We are shown some really beautifully embroidered garments, drawn thread work, etc., as well as useful plain cotton dresses for themselves. Also, in a small room next to the schoolroom, a number of delightful baskets, dish-covers, plates, head coverings for protection against the sun, large hats, bags, etc., all made out of palm-leaves interwoven with strips of brilliantly coloured cloth, scarlet, green, blue, and yellow, finished off with little bunches of the same. I am presented with a souvenir in the shape of a fascinating basket, shaped something like a small beehive, with a cover woven with many colours and a black cloth handle, also a quaint little yellow comb with red spots.

Lying in a woven plate we notice some coins. The doctor tells us he is making a collection of

medals and coins found after the recent fighting in the possession of the Bedouin women. I casually take up one, and to my intense surprise see it is English. Written on one side is: "In commemoration of the visit of the Prince of Wales to India, November, 1875." On the reverse is the profile of the late King Edward, with the words: "Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, born November 9, 1841." It was probably in the possession of one of the Italian sailors who fell in the fighting at Shara Shat or Henni. Now it has come back into English hands, for the doctor kindly gives it to me.

In the schoolroom another Sister is giving a lesson in poetry. Here are many girls, tiny tots and bigger ones together. Some, so fair that they might pass as Europeans, are from the coast or mountains—the darker, true type Bedouin from the interior—then the Soudanese, black and smiling. All rise as we go in, say "*Buon Giorno*," recite poetry, answer questions in geography and history, and so on. Many are very intelligent, while all seem to enjoy their schooling immensely, and are devoted to the good Sisters, who are doing such excellent work with these poor little orphans. It is amusing to hear them repeating the names of the royal children of Italy—a happy touch this.

At the end of the schoolroom I notice a weird-



TYPES OF BEDOUIN WOMEN.

looking machine, and am told it is for making stockings—a very practical idea.

Out again into the sunshine, across the square to see the dispensary, where all who are sick receive attention from the doctor every morning from six to nine—first the men, then the women. It is beautifully clean, fitted up with modern appliances, operating tables, etc.

Next we visit the bathhouse for the girls of the school. This is very well arranged, with plank walls, cement floor, and wash-places all round, while in one corner is a stove for heating water to wash clothes, etc.

Farther on is the disinfecting apparatus, quite modern. When the camp was first started this was most necessary. All the clothes were put into sacks, thrown into the capacious maw of the disinfecter, and left there for hours. At length cleanliness became a habit, and now the people, especially the women, come of their own accord, whenever there is the slightest necessity, bringing their sacks. This speaks volumes to any one knowing the habits of this *not* very cleanly race.

The doctor has full power over the whole place, and has brought it to a high state of perfection. No dirt, no smells, no disease, and no disorder. It is like a little model city, run on modern lines in these ways, yet with the natural Bedouin life left untouched. The people have

their own market in the camp once a week, where they can buy all sorts of provisions.

Some of the women are extremely handsome, and one group at the well is so picturesque that we cannot resist stopping to photo it. These are all married women, wearing the *fafa* or red cloth cap, fitting close to the head under the *barracan*. They don't like being photographed, and it is always a business to get them to pose, but after some giggling and much conversation we manage to arrange the matter.

The boys, like the men, are all gone into the town, where they work as market porters, etc. Upon their return in the evening the first thing they do is to have a bath in the big bathing-place provided for them. As we pass along between the tents our attention is caught by a very happy small girl amusing herself by jumping like a frog round and round a tree. Alas for Fatma! the doctor's eye catches her at the same time.

"Why are you not in school, Fatma?"

A wriggle and a grin—just such as a truant in any village at home would give as answer to the question.

"Now you go straight along to school," and with a dejected walk, one shoulder higher than the other, off she goes. But she starts the frog jump all down the street as soon as she thinks

we are not looking. Another touch of human nature that makes the whole world kin!

The religious instruction is conducted by the Imam—as of course also the marriages, funerals, or feasts.

Just as we are leaving a girl runs up to show us with great pride a knitted purse which she has made, as usual brilliant in hue. She asks about $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. in English money for it, and it goes into the basket along with my other souvenirs of a most interesting and delightful morning.

**THROUGH
THE OASIS
TO SHARA SHAT
AND
HENNI**



CHAPTER XVIII

THROUGH THE OASIS TO SHARA SHAT AND HENNI

Tombs of the Karamanli—Fort Hamidieh—Memorial tombs—
Trenches—Fort Henni—The tragic mosque—An Eastern well
—School of the Menscia.

SUCH a wonderful day—like one of our best July or August days in England. A cloudless blue sky, fading to pale yellow on the horizon. The Mediterranean, in smiling mood, breaks with a faint ripple on the sands as we drive over them, eastwards out of Tripoli. We are bound for Shara Shat, to see the tombs erected to the brave fellows many of whom endured such a lingering agony of torture before they met their death in the hand-to-hand fighting which took place in that very oasis during October, 1911, just two years ago. The roads are very heavy with deep sand, but our pair of grey Arab horses—the best in Tripoli, as our driver proudly assures us—take us along in style. A bit of a character, this driver. When he first came here there were

only ten carriages for hire ; now, he tells us, with a sad shake of the head, there are 120—what a difference in two years !

A steep pull uphill, and we leave the shore, then another ten minutes' drive brings us to the Tombs of the Karamanli. Here their royal dead sleep peacefully, knowing nothing and caring less for all the changes that have come to pass in Tripoli since the power left the hands of their Dynasty. They have chosen a wonderful spot, high on the sandy cliff, overlooking the sea, in solitary stillness. The domes and walls gleam startlingly white in the sun, while, with the exception of an Arab boy asleep on the steps of the tomb on the shady side, not a soul is in sight.

When I remorselessly rouse the sleeper from his slumbers to be photographed his temper is a good deal better than mine would have been under the same provocation. However, a smile goes a long way, and a copper or two farther still.

There is a marabout to the left, the space between it and the tombs, which are two in number, being entirely covered with graves, those of their faithful Arab subjects. Through the grilled opening in front of each tomb we can see the Sarcophagi. The heat, beating up from the burning sand, is so intense that we are forced to return to the carriage. Driving along we are struck by



TOMBS OF THE KARAMANLI.



MARABOUT NEAR THE TOMBS.

the immense amount of red pimenti (or chilies) lying out to dry in the sun. Almost every house has the front of long white wall absolutely covered with a mass of scarlet, the sight of which makes one hotter than ever. Having turned down a narrow little road, in between high walls of prickly pear, we bump into an enormous hole which our coachman, in the excitement of an interesting conversation with an apparently deaf donkey-boy, has failed to observe. It is a distinct shock, so we conclude we had better get out. Away to the left, across some broken ground, is the old Fort Hamidieh: The wooden lighthouse was destroyed in the bombardment and a fine modern one of brick has since been built, near the old Spanish fort Osmanieh, on the western side of the harbour. There are some of the Turkish cannon left, but of the fort itself there are few vestiges remaining.

Carefully avoiding the hole this time, our driver turns to the left, and soon we come to the oasis. There are still signs of the fighting which took place in this now green and peaceful spot. Many palm-trees have lost their feathery tops, while houses stand half demolished or with great holes in the walls. It is unnecessary for me to dwell upon the story of treachery and punishment; rather let us stop and pay a visit to the memorial erected to the memory of the 93rd

Infantry and the 10th Artillery, built on the very spot where they fought and fell. This is the first monument we come to, but there are many others, some in groups to the memory of many from the same regiment; some single ones, erected by relations or friends. Here is a Bersagliere tending the graves of his fallen comrades. He shows us the spot marking a deep well into which were thrown one hundred and fifty poor fellows, the living with the dead. It is a tragic oasis this. The grass lies fresh and green, while high up in many a palm-tree we can see the Arabs busy collecting the fruit, others driving their cattle home. Here and there droves of goats are waiting to be milked, and as we walk children follow us, begging as usual—all the daily, peaceful life. But along the road from Shara Shat, in striking contrast, are these graves, and the long line of trenches still standing just as it was built, right up to Henni, or Hani as it was known under the Turks. They show us a mosque here where those brave Bersaglieri were found crucified alive by the Arabs after terrible tortures. There are many more tombs in Henni, among others one to the Bersaglieri from the *popolo di Trastevere* in Rome: These are all close to the new barracks.

Wandering a little way into the oasis, we sit down under a gadzi-tree, with its feathery leaves

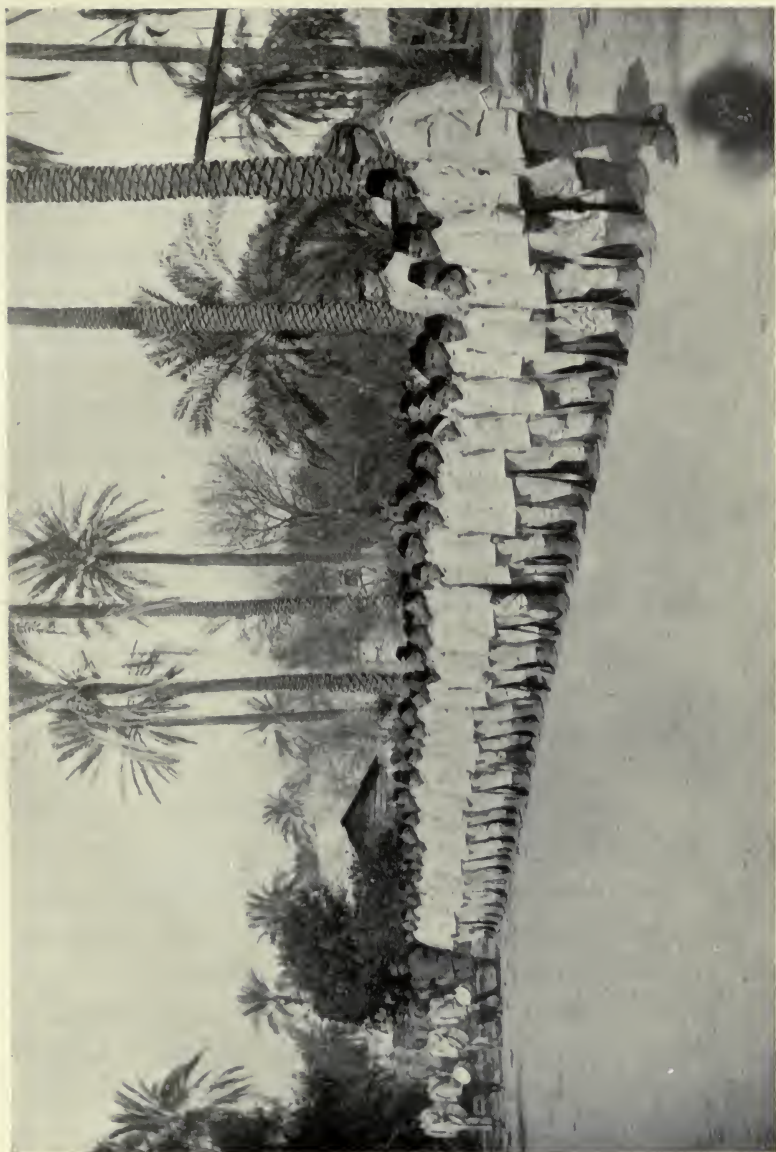
and little fluffy yellow balls of flowers, to watch an old Arab watering his garden. The wells of the East have been described a thousand times, and we ourselves have seen many, yet there is a peculiar charm and fascination about the one before us. The strong little cow toiling up and down the steep earth slope, the regular splash of the water as the great skin-bag rises from the well and empties itself into the cistern, the monotonous undertone song of the Arab—it is all very quiet and refreshing. Thus was the life here before the fighting—when the gardens were tended by their Arab owners, and all was flourishing. So will it be again, we hope; for the Italians have published a decree inviting all the old owners who fled into the interior to return to their property, promising that those houses and gardens which in the meanwhile have been occupied temporarily by Europeans shall be evacuated if the Arabs will return to them within three years.

Reluctantly we leave the well. The road back to Tripoli takes us past an exquisite mosque to the left, the Djema of Feschlum. Many-domed, with shining white cupolas, purple-shadowed walls, it stands embowered in palms, a pearl of the oasis. Just outside the town we come to yet another—the Djema Durar, unique in shape, with buttresses supporting the four domes.

The day holds yet another hour or two of

promise for us, as we are invited, with other friends, by the Resident of the Menscia (or country district), Captain F——, to see his school of Arab "Boy Scouts," if one may so call them, and are looking forward with eager interest to the inspection. Surely it is the first time that such a thing has been undertaken with Arab boys? These little fellows are all Arabs or negroes orphaned in the war, boys who would almost inevitably have grown up useless citizens, if not worse. Now they are being taught self-respect, discipline, and good citizenship. The Resident has started this work all off his own bat, so to speak, but it is probable that the Government will take up the school, which promises to be a "going concern."

When we arrive at the Menscia, just outside the town at the commencement of the oasis, we are met at the door of the Residency by the captain with some of his staff. He conducts us first to the dormitories, two in number—long, spacious buildings, spotlessly clean. All is run on military lines, while order reigns supreme. To any one who knows the happy-go-lucky Arab nature it is a marvel that boys of from eight to twelve or fourteen years of age should have been so trained in such a short time—for the school has been in existence only about nine months. Out in the fine playground, surrounded by a belt of trees on two sides, with the school buildings to



THE SCHOOL OF THE MENSCLIA.

the left, we see the boys, 122 in number, drawn up in two companies. All are dressed in khaki, with scarlet fezzes, and very smart they look too. Military drill and exercises are faultlessly gone through, followed by a march past, headed by the band! One cute little fellow is called up to answer many questions in geography and arithmetic. He knows the capital of England all right! Nervous work, this examination before so many strangers, one would think—but *he* doesn't care. He is a corporal, and will make an excellent soldier one day. He is followed by another, and a striking contrast. This one is distinctly lacking in intelligence, answers *every* question put to him hopelessly wrong—but goes back to the line perfectly happy, so what does it matter? After the march past the boys scamper off to put on undress uniform, loose suits with white caps, and enjoy themselves immensely in the gymnasium—parallel bars, vaulting horse, swings, etc.—out in the playground.

This amusing entertainment over, we go to see the large bath-place, cement-floored, with wash-places all round, where the boys have a grand splash every day.

Thence to the schoolroom, where it is distinctly warm, while we listen to the boys singing Italian national songs, accompanied on a piano! The heartiness of it and the novelty make us forget

the heat. Arab boys are very like English boys when they sing in chorus—they put their whole hearts *and* lungs into the business.

The evening meal, consisting of soup, with *pasta* (excellent stuff I thought when I tasted it) and bread, is served with military precision. Two great steaming hot cauldrons full, served out in tins ranged in shining rows on trestles, and apportioned by the small non-commissioned officers, two at a time, vanish with remarkable rapidity. Big loaves of Arab bread are then distributed, which it is amusing to see eaten by the youngsters in the open air afterwards. In honour of our visit they are allowed extra rations of sweets.

So we leave them, as happy as boys can be, with every chance given them for a useful, self-respecting life. Their religion is daily taught by the Imam (priest), who comes to the school for that purpose.

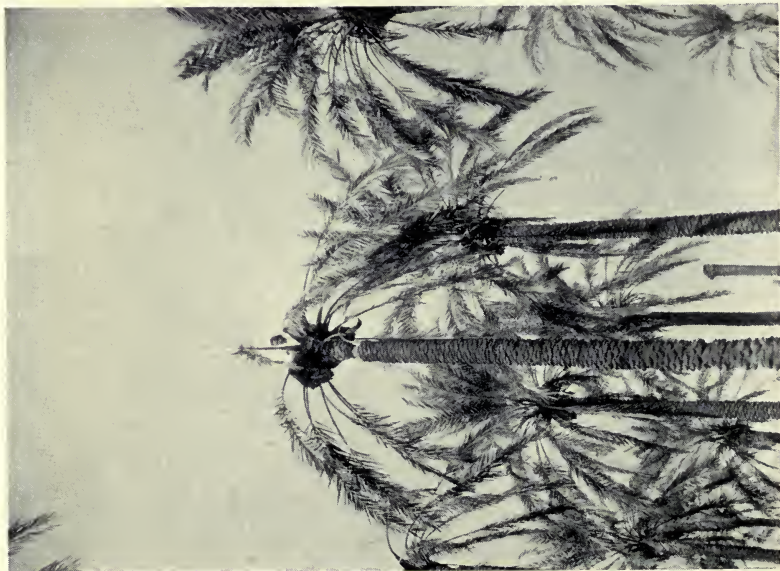
One incident, a touch of nature that makes the whole world kin, draws my attention, while the boys are amusing themselves in the playground and we enjoy the welcome cup of tea a short distance from them. One of the little fellows is called out by name, as his sister has come to see him. He runs to meet her, while she holds out her arms to receive him, then kisses him first on each cheek then on the hand. She is just a very poor, ignorant Bedouin woman, in picturesque rags,

but she clings to this her only brother, as she tells us, with intense affection.

It is a pathetic little scene ; one wishes that something could be done for these women too. All must have a beginning, however. All honour to the man who, quietly and unassumingly, aided by his enthusiastic staff of officers, has started this noble work, shouldering the " white man's burden."



COLLECTING DATES.



EXTRACTING LEGHBI.

**ENVIRONS
OF TRIPOLI:
TAJURA**

CHAPTER XIX

ENVIRONS OF TRIPOLI: TAJURA

Pictures by the way—The Salt Lake—Marabout Sidi Nafat—
Furious camel—Importunate Arab children—Suk-el-Djemma—
Amruss—Pretty Jewess—Street of the smiths.

THE roads, they tell us, are *very* heavy with deep sand. But I see clouds gathering away on the horizon, and, knowing that when it *does* begin to rain here it takes some time to stop, we determine, in spite of the sand, to see Tajura, Amruss, and Suk-el-Djemma. This is the first day for nearly three weeks without brilliant sunshine. But the sky, though somewhat overcast, has a luminous glow, which is reflected like a deep purple cloud on the sea. We are taking the same road as for Shara Shat, but not very far. Tajura is about ten miles east from Tripoli, too great a distance to drive there and back by carriage in one morning. So as we want to visit Zanzur in the afternoon, we have hired a motor-car, with specially protected tyres against the action of the sand, for the day, and start off at 8 a.m. in high

spirits. A word here about the motors in Tripoli. There are plenty of military wagons, one or two private cars, this motor in which we are now carefully steering through the crowded streets, and a taxi-cab, which is only for hire in the town itself. Before the Italian occupation, I hear, on good authority, that the only motor-car existing in the place was looked upon as such a *rara avis* that it was kept in the School of Arts—never allowed to venture out, too great a treasure!

The road is rather bumpy as we near the oasis of the Menscia. I am trying to take notes of the many interesting details, an almost superhuman task; the only way is to pull up whenever anything specially attractive strikes one. Now we come to a spot where a road branches off to the left to Amruss, and a good way farther on to the Salt Lake. But we keep straight on, heading direct for Tajura, passing the Via Sacra, as the tragic road of Shara Shat has been named. On the right we notice the Mosque Sualin. All the time we are meeting the most picturesque groups—camels and donkeys heavily loaded, Bedouin women, sheikhs mounted on richly caparisoned horses, children innumerable, negroes, a pageant of colour and movement. To-day is Friday, the market-day at Suk-el-Djemma, and these are the “early birds” who have been buying the weekly “worm” so to speak. The brilliant scarlet garments of the Bedouins



IN THE OASIS.

make wondrous splashes of colour against the high sand walls between which we are passing. To right and left all is fresh and green. Glimpses of Arab wells, of marabouts, and white houses catch the eye between the palm-trees. We are the only things out of the picture, but then we are not *on the stage*, only lookers-on.

Presently we come upon a large group of camels in the middle of the road, sprawling in ungainly fashion in every direction. Our driver hoots and hoots again, but they block the way till we are almost upon them. Then panic ensues, while they lurch blindly, and one is seized with fury. Rising on his hind legs (a thing I have never seen a camel attempt before), he opens his cavernous mouth, roaring like a lion with rage, then comes straight for the car. As he happens not to be on my side I am very brave, while giving excellent advice to my companion as to behaviour when attacked by a camel. We cannot advance as the others still block the way. The motor hoots, camels roar and grumble, Arabs shout, causing a flaring commotion, until a man mounted on a much bigger camel shoves the cantankerous one away. They can be very vicious at times, but it is rare for one to lose his temper to this extent.

Now that the road is clear, we proceed to drive past fields of green pepper, beloved of the Arabs, while to the right are the limekilns, the road past

them leading to Ain Zara, some five miles away. This place is a *fonduk*, or commercial halting-place for caravans.

Here we are at Suk-el-Djemma, but as we intend stopping on the way back, when the market will be much busier, no halt is made. This district, including Amrius, is called the Sahêl. We are on a fine broad road here, where there is much less sand, between high banks topped by the inevitable prickly pear. Passing on the left the little Mosque Geselafi, with its quaint buttresses, we notice a narrow street leading direct to the Salt Lake. Here on the right is an oil "machine," a great round block of stone or brick, looking rather like a well, where the oil is crushed out of the olives by the Arabs in primitive fashion, for the oasis is full of olive-trees. Farther on we pull up in the Scerfet-el-Mellaha, as the district around the Mellaha or Salt Lake is called. On the left, at the top of a sandy hill, is a lonely little marabout. As we climb this hill we are followed by a number of small Arab children, who seem to spring out of the earth on all sides. One, Urjab by name gives us much interesting information. I have previously given him a cake, thus making Urjab friendly disposed towards us. He even suggested that we should enter the marabout. This is the first time I have ever been inside one of these little round-domed shrines, erected to the Mussul-

man saints, which abound in Eastern lands. The tomb of the saint is opposite the entrance—a long, narrow, roughly carved block of stone, shaped rather like a mummy case. All along the top of the lid are votive offerings of dates, most of them very dry, some beads, a little lamp, and one or two dried flowers. Hanging on cords, stretched along the walls just inside the doorway, are strips of cloth, satin, or velvet, all colours of the rainbow, votive offerings to the saint, *senassik* as they are called in Arabic. But Urjab thinks we have been there long enough. "Let us go out," he says gravely in Italian, and after he has reverently kissed the tomb and the strips of cloth, heeding not their *exceeding* dirtiness, he closes the door. All around the marabout are graves—very poor Arab graves—no slabs of stone nor even of wood, but only great leaves of the prickly pear stuck into the earth, or an old basket turned upside down to mark the spot.

Below us to the left lies the Salt Lake—about three-quarters of a mile long; it looks very small compared with the great Salt Lakes (*Shotts*) near Tozeur (Tunisia). Urjab knows all about this too. He says in the summer men come and carry off the salt on the backs of many camels to the sea, where big boats take it away.

It is now time to go back to the motor, which we find surrounded by a perfect cloud of small

Arabs, boys and girls. They hang on to the back and sides of the car with a deafening clamour. Having seen me give the cake, of course all want one. I hastily throw them half a dozen biscuits and the car starts, leaving many in the dust, a few still clinging on, enjoying the fun much more than we do. But the pace is too hot, the last one drops off, leaving us at peace once more.

We pass an old well with a curious carved mouth of stone which is Roman, all the rest being Arabic. A stretch of bare sandy land, and here begins the district of Tajura, which, together with that of Sahêl, has about 50,000 inhabitants. Driving through the village of Sidi Bellesher, we notice the seal of Solomon cut into the walls of a *fonduk*, so that no evil spirit nor any person possessed of the devil shall enter in.

In the fields to right and left the Arabs are ploughing with the same old primitive instrument which has been in use among them for who knows how many centuries! A small cow draws it by means of ropes attached to a rough halter round her neck.

We stop to examine one of these "ploughs," called the *mochrâd*. Then on again, to Tajura, the centre of this district of the oasis, with Residency, schools both for Italian and Arab children, and an interesting mosque. It was built

about the year 1500, in severe style, with long front, surmounted by ten small domes. The old man comes with his keys to open the door for us. He is blind and is guided by another Arab, who has only one eye. Inside we find the same purity and simplicity of architecture. There are forty-eight columns of African marble or granite, among them two beautiful fluted pillars—all, alas! are whitewashed. The *mimbar* is excessively plain and falling to pieces, while the *mehrab* has a portico of black and white marble. But the effect of the light from the windows at the side falling on this forest of pillars, where there is nothing else to distract the eye, is very beautiful. The air is full of minute particles of sand, which, floating in the pale sunlight, make a Rembrandtesque effect against the deep shadows. The minaret exists no longer; it has fallen, so the Muezzin calls the prayer from the roof now.

There is a legend about this mosque, too. The story goes that it was constructed by Christian slaves under Arab direction. The ruler of the country in those days is said to have carried off the beautiful young daughter of a Christian king. He married her, but when her father came "with a thousand ships" to demand her return, it was refused on the ground that she had now become a Mohammedan and therefore could not return to Christianity. Finally, after long discussion, a

compromise was effected, this mosque being built in commemoration. It is well worth a visit, as from the architectural point of view it is most interesting.

It is now only 11 o'clock, the time at which the Suk-el-Djemma is at its busiest, and back we speed. The Market Place here is worth going a long way to see. Imagine a great square, surrounded by walls and palm-trees, with out-buildings here and there, crammed full of Arabs and negroes, standing or squatting in groups, with their camels and donkeys as ever their inseparable companions, bargaining over the purchase of fruit, bread, vegetables, meat, fowls, sheep, every conceivable provision. Here is a group of Bedouin girls, selling dates, and, in separate baskets, date stones. The camels and donkeys enjoy the latter, I suppose as dessert. Every one to his taste! Enormous green melons at twopence each are here in thousands I should say, every one seeming to have one in his arms. Farther on is heaped up golden grain—a busy corner this. At every step we almost fall over a child or a camel, or some such trifle; it is the most difficult thing to make a passage through this mass of beings, especially when one is trying one's best to avoid *touching* any of them. Many are blind, for there is much of this disease in Tripoli and in the districts around; but the Italian doctors are taking this up very earnestly

and hope to attack the root of the disease so as to check its further spread. Behind the market is an artesian well, which was started by the Turks. They were unable to find water, but the Italians have been more successful, having discovered it at a depth of about 150 ft. This will be a great boon here. In the near distance we can see a surging crowd, the heart of which is our automobile. In spite of the help of police and energetic "*Barras*" from all sides, it is an effort to get in. But we do manage it at last, successfully steered through the mass with but one slight mishap, not to us but to a laden donkey, who is so stupefied by the "hoot! hoot!" that he turns broadside on and is bowled neatly over, but without any damage to himself. His load will take some time to collect, however, as it mostly consists of onions.

A little way up to the right is the Jewish village of Amruss. The streets are very narrow and exceedingly dirty; so are the inhabitants. Never have I seen so much dirt artistically displayed as in this corner of the earth. We walk all round the village. There are some pretty types of Jewesses, but they refuse to be photoed, which is annoying of them. One really beautiful girl, most picturesque in her costume of yellow and red striped skirt, white and blue chemisette, with pale blue silk handkerchief on her head, bangs the door of her abode

in our faces, so we "move on." Nearly all the 900 inhabitants are Jews, and live by the manufacture of the *minjeel* or scythes. The street of these smiths is just a succession of pictures—the dark interiors of the smithies, the glow of the furnace, the sparks flying off the red-hot iron, the swarthy faces bending over their work in groups, their dirty but picturesque garments of every hue, the women gathered at the doors to gossip. We are fascinated by the vividness of the impression. In one the furnace bellows are being kept going by a blind man, who works them with his feet, the while his hands are busy with some weaving of cords. He certainly does not waste his time. On the white-washed wall over the door of one house we notice a collection of rudely painted signs in scarlet and blue: flags, birds, the hand of Fatma (with which we are so familiar both here and in Tunis), the sign of the fish, and so on—all to bring good luck to the house. We cross a courtyard to peer into a little room at the side of the "school"—mats spread on the floor of a covered arcade close to the little mosque. Here we see the wooden engraved tablets on which the children learn their letters. They look as dirty as everything else. But where every one is the same what does it matter? They are all quite happy, and so we leave them, escorted to the car by one of the finest types of negro we have ever seen, who submits with amiable grace to be



ARAB BOYS AT SCHOOL.

photoed. This has been a glorious time, and we reach our hotel with good appetites, feeling we have not wasted a moment of this precious morning.

**ENVIRONS
OF
TRIPOLI :
ZANZUR**



ON THE WAY TO ZANZUR.

CHAPTER XX

ENVIRONS OF TRIPOLI: ZANZUR

Zanzur—Passing Gargaresch—*Leghbi*—Origin of the name—
Presidency of Zanzur—Bon Bouker—Schools—Mystery of the
desert in the evening.

ONCE more to the car and off again, this time westwards out of Tripoli, to visit Zanzur, which is about fifteen miles distant.

Leaving the bread-market behind us (every road seems to lead through this market), we pass the Shara-el-Gherbi on the left and bump gently over the railway line which leads, by a more circuitous route than the one we take, to Gargaresch and Zanzur. Farther on we come to the long wall of defence, built at the time of the war, and extending as far as Shara Shat. Through the Porta di Gargaresch, past the now dry bed of the torrent Ouadi, we find ourselves in a cutting recently constructed by the Italians between walls of sand. As we rise to the top of the hill we can see in the distance the palm-trees of the little oasis of Gargaresch. We are following a road that runs close to the sea until

quite near Zanzur, when it turns inland. Now we near Gargaresch, which was once a Roman village, named after the Emperor Caracalla. It is a peaceful little spot, with its white houses, green fields, and palm-trees, purely agricultural. It looks quite uninhabited, but as we draw level with the houses out come the Arabs to gaze after us. Farther on to the left we pass the stone quarries, dating from the time of the Romans, which provide much of the stone being used for the building of the new harbour works. Yet a little farther, on a sandy hillock, stands a lonely tomb, erected to the memory of the soldiers who fell in the battle of Gargaresch.

As we go under the railway bridge out into the open desert there is nothing as far as the eye can reach but the long stretch of sand, here and there blown by the wind into wavy lines, now and again rising to hillocks and ridges. That long dark line faintly seen on the horizon is Zanzur, which, under the name of Assaria, was a fashionable resort in the time of the Romans for officials who needed a "rest cure." It might well merit the same title now, for it is an ideal spot. As we draw near we pass rich fields under cultivation, green with a greenness that belongs only to the oasis, where the eyes, wearied by miles of monotonous sand, are refreshed as nowhere else by these vivid patches of verdure.

The oasis is irrigated by means of a multitude of small canals, which branch out in every direction, the water being supplied by wells. Thanks to this excellent water supply, Zanzur produces an abundance of cereals and fruits, also jasmine, the flower beloved of the Arab.

There are a million and a half palm-trees in this oasis, which is really formed of seven small oases—a district containing 12,000 inhabitants. In the old days Zanzur used to export immense quantities of olives, dates, figs, oranges, pomegranates, and almonds, but now the inhabitants are chiefly devoted to agriculture, as the fresh green fields and pasture bear witness.

How beautiful the place must be in the spring! I have spent long days of early April in the lovely oasis of Tozeur (Tunisia) when the fruit-trees were all in flower, great masses of white and pale pink blossom everywhere, covering the little huts of the gardeners, blotting out the trunks of the palm-trees, clothing the gardens in a soft robe of fairy-like gossamer. Meanwhile the Arabs wandered through the maze of paths singing their interminable love songs, or playing on their little double-fluted pipes to the answering songs of the birds hidden in the blossom. The air was filled with soft, sweet scents. Spring in the oasis—one could not meet with anything more poetic though one search the world over.

The Arabs are exceedingly fond of a drink called

legghi, which is obtained from the palm-trees. Everywhere they drink it, from the peasant upwards, and they tell us that in Zanzur many take as much as three or four quarts a day. In appearance it is like milk mixed with frothy barley-water. I have tasted it, but cannot say it holds any attractions for me. However, that is purely a matter of taste, as many people have told me they find it delicious. It is made from the sap of the tree, which is stripped in the spring and summer of its beautiful fan of feathery leaves. Then the nimble Arab aloft makes deep incisions in the top of the trunk, fastening directly below them a jar, into which all night the coveted liquid streams from the wounded tree. Early in the morning, before sunrise, to avoid the evaporation which would otherwise take place, up he swarms again like a squirrel, his feet apparently quite insensible to the hard scales of the pain trunk, to take his precious *legghi*. One palm will furnish from one and a half to two gallons a day for quite six weeks in succession, after which the process is discontinued, or the tree would die of anæmia, so to speak. Three years of absolute rest are necessary to allow the palm to regain its former vigour, and be crowned once more with its diadem of leaves. Then it is again ready to give of its life sap to those who seek it. The *legghi* has been compared to the liquid of the coco-nut, and perhaps there is a family resemblance. It becomes



"THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT" AT ZANZUR.

Bou Bouker and the smallest Boy Scout.

clearer and more sparkling but also more sour five hours after extraction, then ferments quickly and is more intoxicating. The Arabs drink it in all its stages, each stage being marked by more zigzags in the walk of the "Faithful." Twenty-four hours after extraction it is impossible to drink it unmixed, so they "arrange" it for sale with the addition of water and sugar. If you want to drink *legghi*, do so quickly while it is yet fresh.

There is a legend attached to the origin of the name which is so "Tripolina," as they say here, that I must give it. It dates from many centuries back, when the Romans held sway in North Africa. In a beautiful villa just on the confines of Zanzur the young daughter of a Cæsar lay seriously ill. Nothing seemed to do her any good till one day advice was tremblingly sought from an ancient marabout (saint),¹ who was known to be the possessor of many weird secrets, of many strange and powerful talismans. His answer was short and to the point: "Go to the Menscia (country) and press out the liquid that runs in the woody veins of a palm." This was done.

The girl drank two cupfuls. At the third she cried to the surrounding incredulous crowd of onlookers, "*Leghbia! leghbia!*" ("I feel well! I feel well!") She was cured, and the *legghi* became a

¹ The word "marabout" applies equally to the saint and his shrine.

popular and apparently a healthy drink among the Arabs from that day.

Our car pulls up at the entrance to the Residency of Zanzur, where we are received by the Resident, Lieutenant C——, and a group of officials, among them several sheikhs in flowing blue and white robes. After a thrice welcome cup of tea with our courteous host, we are taken to visit the school, passing the gymnasium on the way. The school is very interesting; we see the small Arab children reading and writing Italian, and doing good work at the blackboard. Two of them recite poems and present us each with a bunch of flowers. In one room a number of quite small boys are studying the Koran; a very tiny person steps out of the row of his own accord to greet me, and we gravely shake hands. As we go downstairs we try to make the little negro whose turn it is to stand sentinel for the afternoon speak to us, but he has too keen a sense of duty! In the great square in front of the Residency, wonderfully beautiful in the sunset, surrounded by palm-trees, stands a mighty mulberry-tree, the pride of the district.

We are introduced to Bou Bouker, the negro servant of the Mudir (assistant to the Resident). Bou Bouker is a personality, and the biggest man in the district—he looks about seven feet high and is broad in proportion. He certainly makes a picture standing holding the Mudir's horse with

its crimson velvet saddle-cloth. He tells us he has two wives, and would have two more if he could afford them, but his purse will not run to that.

We should like to linger in the garden near the square, watching the glorious sunset, but it grows late and will soon be dark, so we take our seats in the car, and, with many hearty thanks and good-byes, start off on our return journey to Tripoli. How changed is the road! Instead of the clear monotony of the sandy waste, which by daylight tires the eyes, we feel as though we are gliding through a land of infinite dreams. There is a light, silvery haze over the desert, through which the moon gleams palely, while all around is silence, apparently unending, into which we are drifting. Away on the right, up against the pale sky, here and there stands a lonely palm-tree—otherwise there are no signs of life nor anything to break the line of the sand-dunes. It is all strangely mysterious, and so unlike anything else. As the mist grows thicker the track over the sand is barely visible, till at length our driver stops, perplexed, saying we are on the wrong road. A little more to the left, then on we glide again, for this bit of the road is smooth and broad. Now we begin to meet groups of Arabs returning from Tripoli with their camels, ghostly shadows looming large and vague in the uncertain light. One man is singing a

monotonous song on three notes with a long-drawn-out wailing cadence, which floats back to us from the dreamland behind, out of which we are passing now, for the lights of Tripoli are just in front of us.

Slowly we drive through the crowded Via Azizia with its cafés packed to overflowing, past the harbour with its many twinkling lights—to reality once more.



THE MARKET PLACE AT ZANZUR.

**A GLIMPSE
OF THE
HINTERLAND:
GHARIAN**

CHAPTER XXI

A GLIMPSE OF THE HINTERLAND: GHARIAN

Journey in the train—Azizia—The cammion—Bugheilan—The wonderful road of the Alpini—First plateau cultivation—Second plateau—Olives—Roman stone tablet—Gharian—Population—Troglodytes—Administration—The school—Visit to the Troglodyte women's prison—Experience of a lady visitor—My visit and tea-drinking with Troglodyte family—The Libian camp—German cemetery—Fruit cultivation—Roman remains.

TO penetrate any distance into the hinterland of Tripoli it is necessary to obtain permission from the Governor, as the whole country is still under military control. This permission was most kindly granted to us, giving us a wonderful experience, for the interior has up to now been practically a closed land.

The train from Tripoli to Azizia leaves at 7 a.m., meaning an early start from the hotel, as the station lies at the extreme of the town, towards the Menscia.

The sun has not yet risen as we drive along—only a few sleepy Arabs are about, wrapped up

in their *barracans*, for it is very chilly, not to say cold, at 6.30 a.m., and people in Tripoli are not particularly early risers. We reach the station in good time, which is lucky for us, as a few minutes later all available space is crowded. The carriages are very comfortable, but room is limited. We share the first-class compartments with many Italian officers and a party of Arab sheikhs.

It is a glorious morning, the sun rising in a cloudless sky, while the Mediterranean, stretching away on our right, has only smiles for us to-day. Leaving the oasis of Gurgi on our left, and Zanzur far away to the right, our first stop is at Misciasta, where our train meets the returning train from Azizia. There is a small fort here with wire entanglements, a relic of the war, now deserted. We travel through mile after mile of desert, stopping at the little oasis of Suani-ben-Adem. Then on again through miles of sand-hillocks, topped with tufts of coarse grass, broken here and there by a small fort. The train travels very smoothly, if not very fast, there being several long waits to take in goods of all kinds at the various stations by the way. We reach Azizia at 10.30, having covered a distance of about thirty miles. The train is really timed to arrive at 9.30, but much depends on the amount of cargo to be taken in.

Azizia, so named by the Turks, or "Chedua,"



THE MARKET PLACE AT AZIZIA.

as the Arabs call it, is really in the making at present, as the Italians are busy reconstructing the castle and other buildings, left in a state of indescribable dirt and neglect by the Turks. The castle, or Residency, a mosque, and the new barracks just finished are the most important. The population numbers about 14,000. There is a large square which on market-days, twice a week, is filled with crowds of Arabs belonging to the tribe of Urchefana, who come in from the surrounding districts.

The Resident receives us with kind courtesy, and we have just time for a look at the new barracks and a stroll round the square before the motor, post cammion, which runs every day and waits for no man, is ready, and we must take our seats. These cammions and their chauffeurs are quite wonderful. The cammions are of F.I.A.T. construction, very strong, to resist the wear and tear of the new roads, with double-tyred back wheels. The chauffeurs belong to the Italian Automobile Battalion, instructed in the technical schools of Rome and Turin. These men perform marvels of steering, their audacity and courage being astonishing. About ten miles from Azizia we pass an old Arab well, 180 ft. deep, with eight reservoirs for irrigation, the well of Bir Lella, the only one in all the plain around. The heavy rains of the past week have made the road across the

plain somewhat rutty, but the chauffeur avoids all unnecessary bumps and makes a new road wherever the old one is impassable. I have the post of honour on the front seat next to the driver, so have an easier time of it than those behind. The wind is blowing strong and cold—keen mountain air, right in our faces; ahead of us lies the desert, with the mountains of the Gebel (or *haut plateau*) region beyond. At the foot of the first mountain range we make a halt of a few minutes at Bugheilan, where a company of Askaris from Somaliland are encamped. Here there is a well and large reservoir. Then we begin to ascend the wonderful mountain road built by the Alpini, and extending as far as Nalut, 160 miles away. This road, which is a triumph of engineering skill, was constructed in six months. The first portion, as far as Gharian, was built in three months, and is a perfect mountain road, as smooth and level as any in Europe. We mount up and up, a long steady climb, for Gharian lies at a height of over 1,900 ft. above the level of the plain. Each turn of the road gives us a glimpse of the panorama below us stretching endlessly away to the horizon. We are passing through the oldest rock formation, the Eocene, parallel strata, over the first road that has ever been made through these frowning mountains, which are now brought for the first time under the domination of a civilizing Power. Just as we reach

the first plateau we pass a little caravan of laden camels, whose drivers have some difficulty in persuading them not to commit suicide over the steep side of the precipice while we motor slowly past them. The country on this plateau, Sidi-Marez as it is called, is covered with very fine olive-trees, and is almost entirely under cultivation, mostly barley. Everywhere are small Arab houses, marabouts here and there, fields of asphodel—a prosperous and peaceful district.

Experiments in cultivation are being made all over the country by the Italian Government, 800 cwt. of grain having been distributed among the Arabs, to be paid back after the next harvest.

Now we come to the second plateau, where again are olive-trees in fine growth. Arab women are busy gathering olives ; others pass with branches on their heads. We cross the ancient caravan track, such a contrast to this marvellous modern road, which just here is at its best, having long, smooth stretches with sharp turns, which the cammion takes at a good pace. We pull up for a minute to inspect an old stone tablet by the wayside, with a Roman inscription to Septimus Severus, discovered here by the solders when building the road. Side by side is a modern tablet, with an inscription to the Alpini in commemoration of their great work. Thus does history repeat itself.

We are nearing Gharian, the home of the Trog-

lodytes. Here, on a hill, is the mosque, and we pass some of the cave houses which we long to inspect. At length the cammion comes to a stop in front of the Residency, where the Resident and his staff of officers are waiting outside to receive us. We are not sorry to get down and stretch our legs after the thirty-six miles' drive, interesting though it has been.

The region of Gharian is divided into four parts, Beni-Griffa, Beni-Daut, Gouassen, and Arban, and the administration is in the hands of the Italian Resident, who is assisted by an Italian Vice-Resident, an Arabic Kaimakan, and two Arab Mudirs.

The "invisible town" of the Troglodyte inhabitants numbers about 7,000, the population for the whole region being 42,000. There are two *kabyles* (clans) of Jews (each formed of twenty families), the rest of the population comprising Arabs and Berbers, with some negroes.

To the right of Gharian is Mount Tekout, 2,460 ft. above the level of the sea, from which can be seen a magnificent panoramic view. We were very anxious to climb this point on mules, but time was too short. Near the spring, Aïn-el-Turk, is a lime-kiln made by the soldiers, for the Italians have retained that great gift of the Romans—their soldiers being not only soldiers but everything else too. They build houses, making their own bricks (we



EN ROUTE FOR GHARIAN.

passed several brickfields where the soldiers were hard at work), build fountains, dig wells, and bake bread. In Gharian the whole Italian garrison is supplied with excellent bread baked by the soldiers. The old "Kasr," or castle, is being repaired, and in a great measure rebuilt, as it was found in a most appalling state of filth and neglect. The General commanding most kindly invited us into his bureau, but, as he explained, at present there is nothing to be seen in the castle itself owing to the repairs which are in hand. However, we saw a very interesting telegram which had just been received, communicating the news of the submission of Fezzan, with very little loss on the Italian side. There is a fine view from the terrace over the great plain below.

We then saw the new Residency which is being built by the soldiers, and visited the school. Here, with the exception of three small Italian boys, all the pupils are Arabs, who are learning to speak, write, and read Italian with incredible swiftness. Not only that: they also show small desire to speak Arabic as soon as they have mastered sufficient Italian, while it is amusing to see how much quicker they are with the Italian arithmetic than with the Arabic. The son of the Kaimakan is a pupil, and a very intelligent one. Naturally, we have a keen desire to visit the Troglodytes, those mysterious dwellers underground, who make

Gharian almost a unique place of interest. They are a very pacific people, and we are told that there are practically no crimes. A sinless community apparently — and certainly a remarkably quiet one, though who knows what may go on underneath!

We come to the "houses" a little way from the Residency, to the left and right of the road. They have a depth of about 40 to 45 ft. Imagine an immense opening, like the yawning mouth of a great pit. Down below is the courtyard of the "house," sometimes a floor of cement, but oftener of the earth, beaten flat. Out of this yard open the rooms, which are cool in the summer and warm in the winter, practical from this point of view. The richer families have one reception room *over* the ground, at a height of 6 or 7 ft. We all descend a dark, tunnel-like passage, down, down into pitch darkness, till we emerge in the courtyard of one of the dwellings. This is the prison for the women, but there are no prisoners just now, only the Arab guardian with his wife and family. To the left is the women's room, into which I am invited. It is very dark, for of course there are no windows. The room is really a cave scooped out in the earth, the only light coming from the doorway. As my eyes grow accustomed to the gloom I can see the ceiling just above my head, almost touching me. Rows of preserved fruit tins, sardine-boxes, old

bananas, Indian corn, and whatnot are strung across it as ornaments, a "fantasia" of decoration. All round the walls are other tins, boxes of native construction, strings of shells, a few Soudanese ornaments, dish-covers, pots and pans. Several holes have been scooped out of the sides of the walls to serve as receptacles for garments or food-stuffs, and there are two old stools—otherwise the room is bare of furniture. There are other rooms, all much the same, all opening out into the courtyard. Some time ago when an Italian lady visited this prison, the female prisoners, who had never seen a European woman before, asked her to take off her hat. No sooner had she done so than in a twinkling all her hairpins were pulled out, to be kept as souvenirs by the women, who looked upon them as most precious mementoes.

It is too late for us to visit any other cave-dwellers this evening, but the next morning brings an interesting experience. We stroll out, unattended by any officials, and sit down to sketch the opening into a mysterious-looking house. Not a soul is in sight—all is quiet as the grave—but we have not been sitting there two minutes before a white figure pops up from the bowels of the earth, followed by another and yet another—like rabbits from their burrows. A dozen children appear as by magic; it is impossible to say from which side or out of what deep cavern they come. In five minutes

we are surrounded by a curious crowd, gazing into our faces, examining our clothes, watching every action with the deepest interest. As yet there are no women except a couple of Soudanese. Then, silhouetted against the sky, on the top of a mound near, a woman appears with startling suddenness. She is dressed in a *barracan* of scarlet and yellow, her face covered, while she comes towards me with uncertain steps, for these women dwellers in the caves have little exercise above ground. The richer ones, of better families, are born in these dim dwellings, never leaving them until they are carried out to be buried.

The woman comes straight to me, and we hold a conversation by signs. We become great friends at once. She tears off an antelope's horn which she is wearing among all her other jewellery and gives it to me for good luck. I present her in exchange with a little scent-bottle from my bag, and then she invites me to her house. Leaving the crowd, we two go off together, she tottering in front of me, for I am surer of my ground here than she. But when we dive down the pitch-dark tunnel entrance to her home, her faltering steps grow certain and steady, while I grope and stumble my way after her like a blind woman. Much relieved to find myself in the courtyard, I am about to enter one of the openings when my hostess grasps a rope hanging at the side of the wall, by means of which she swiftly hauls

herself up to the entrance of the reception-room, just above my head. She then does her best to get me up too, but in vain. Our modern dresses are not made for such gymnastics. It is somewhat startling to be asked to climb a rope up a wall to take tea with a friend. So I remain below, till she, finding her efforts are fruitless, descends by a rope once more, with a sigh of regret at not being able to show me her best drawing-room. We therefore go into the second best, which is large but dark as usual. There is another woman here, who never goes above ground, being of a less adventurous turn than my friend. They make Arab tea for me, *shai* as it is called, made with powdered tea and much, very much sugar, so that it tastes just like a syrup. They also boil eggs for me and press a present of a small pigeon into my hands. We have a great time together, for they are so pleased, these women, with the excitement of my visit, while I enjoy it all quite as much as they do. But the fun is cut short by the appearance of the native servant of the Resident, who has been sent to tell us that time is short as we have many other things to see. So I leave my kind cave friends, not without regret, and grope my way up, up, out into the daylight again, with a bewildered feeling of unreality about the whole episode. I have had tea in many curious places, but this is surely a unique experience—tea with a Troglodyte woman in her own cave dwelling.

We are taken for a long walk all around the place, first to visit the Libian Camp, a fine and picturesque ground framed in olive-trees, where the native troops are exercising, then on to the little German cemetery, where are the graves of two Red Cross doctors and one infirmary attendant who died at Gharian during the war.

We walk across fields of fruit-trees, for in this district all sorts of fruits grow—apples, peaches, apricots, grapes, and almonds. It is a wonderful country for cultivation, having a rich agricultural future. We see some Roman remains with an inscription on one block of stone, barely effaced, which were discovered by the soldiers when building the new Residency. Of course the whole country is literally sown with Roman remains; an archæologist might spend years in seeing and writing of them.

**A GLIMPSE
OF THE
HINTERLAND :
YEFFREN**



CHAPTER XXII

A GLIMPSE OF THE HINTERLAND : YEFFREN

Journey in cammion to Yeffren—Character of the country—Assaba—The Berbers—Commencement of the *haut plateau*—Yeffren—Wonderful panorama—Administration of the place—Division of the region—Population—"This is our Destiny"—Curiosity of the Arabs at seeing a European woman for the first time—Drive to Roumia—"Rebecca at the well"—Back to Gharian—Home to Tripoli once more.

LEAVING the town of the cave-dwellers behind us, we drive through a well-cultivated district—acres and acres of land devoted to fig-trees and olives. We pass the Jewish village, Tegrena, and the Arab cemetery. On the right is the old Berber castle of Tegrena, now in ruins. Beyond the little village of Asbia the road, which has been due south, now turns west, while to the left we get a wide view, over desert and plain, to the mountain chains. A stretch of olive-trees, and then a naked plain—no more trees, but bare, undulating spaces with tufts of esparto-grass, but of a poor quality. Innumerable little birds start up from the

sand and grass on every side, the only signs of life in this arid expanse of land. The wind here is cold and cutting, while the character of the country has changed—hard and cruel it looks after the smiling agricultural fields we have left behind us. Now we come to Assaba, about twenty miles from Gharian, which as recently as March, 1913, was the scene of a battle between the Italians and Baruni, who led the tribes of the Gebel. He is the descendant of the famous rebel chief Ghuma, who fought against the Turks when they took Tripolitania in 1835. The Arabs had a proverb in those days, "Bring me the head of Ghuma," to express an impossibility, so evasive and irrepressible a person was he. Baruni has left the country after his defeat by the Italians, and is believed to be somewhere in Syria, writing his memoirs. They should be interesting reading. There is an ancient Roman castle in Assaba, to the right of the road, behind which, hidden by the hills, stands an old Arabic palace. Arabic women are busy cutting the dry branches of the little *jujubier*-trees, and grass, which they collect as fuel for the winter. Cattle and sheep graze peacefully—a quiet, rural scene on the very spot where the battle raged but a few months ago. Farther on is a small Bedouin encampment of huts, scant protection against this bitter wind. We then pass through Buseirah, a

more important village, but in a dilapidated condition, with walls and roofs subsiding in every direction. Beyond again on the left we pass the road to Misdah, where they tell us are the most wonderful Roman remains.

Now we are driving through a cultivated country more like Gharian, though rougher and harder in character. The road is picturesque, with many turnings, and as we get on farther cultivation becomes rarer. The wind grows stronger and colder while rising towards Yeffren. The ground is stony, but the cammion in its relentless course jolts and bumps over all obstacles. On the right is the dry bed of an *ouadi* (stream) whose rocky course meets us again farther on. Little grey and white birds fly off in swarms, settle, and rise again as we pass. A caravan of camels laden with iron bedsteads is left behind us. On the right we see Gualis, with an old Berber castle, for we are coming to that part of the country where the Berbers, the original population of the north of Africa, are more in evidence. The farther we go to the west the more important this element becomes, for the Arabs, when they conquered Tripolitania in the seventh century, advancing, pushed the Berbers before them. There are many left, more in the south-western part of the country than on the coasts. As is not unnatural, they hate the Arabs. Their lan-

guage is different and not well known ethnologically. They are Moslems, but do not belong to any one of the four classical rites, and have no Imam in their religion—in short, they are “decadents.” They are fair-skinned, and often fair-haired also, while their facial type is quite different from the Arab. They have broad faces, with prominent foreheads, the most peculiar characteristic being the nose, which is small and, as it were, deeply indented into the face between the eyes.

After leaving Gualis we pass the road to Kikla, where the *haut plateau* of Yeffren begins. The road winds and twists like a mountain Alpine track. The plain stretches before, behind, and all around us, brown and dark green, while deep purple mountains stand out in forceful contrast to the golden sky, for the sun is setting in a clear glory. Far away to the left is an old castle, Kasr Gelah, while nearer are villages which, chameleon-like, take on the same colour as the mountains, and are hard to distinguish. The sunset becomes more and more intense in colour, deepening to orange and crimson, lighting up with its rays a beautiful little marabout built right under a great olive-tree. This is indeed a wonderful drive, for the character of the country changes continually and yields us never-ending interest, especially remembering that this same



THE CASTLE OF YEFFREN.

country has been a closed door until now, when the Italians are opening it up to civilization and progress.

A group of picturesque old houses marks the magnificent site of Gelah, then begins a sharp descent, like a road in the Dolomites. The cammion takes the turns and twists like a bird as we dip downwards, passing sandy hills, with little oases of palm-trees on our left. Then upwards again, a sharp rise into the first part of Yeffren, where, on the right, is the Kasr of Musa Bey, the Kaimakan. Once more downhill, then a final sweep upwards, till the cammion stops at the door of the Residency. We are in Yeffren, greeted by the Resident and his staff of officers, and I cannot help feeling a little joyful elation when they tell me that I am the very first European woman who has ever been in Yeffren. And what a remarkable impression the place makes on one! Standing on the hill from which the castle and Residency dominate the surrounding country, we look out on to a panorama which I think can have few equals. Far as the eye can see stretches the wide, purple, undulating plain, merging on the horizon into the opal hues which the departed sun has left behind him. On the left, like cliffs guarding a receding sea, are the ancient mountains, pale yellow and dark green, tinged with violet shadows, bearing upon them the impress of age-old centuries of

time. On the right, to the south, is Tagubort, a village built on a rocky hill, picturesque and fantastic in the dim evening light. The whole character of this country is strong and forceful, even cruel and hard it may be. The mountains absorb the houses and the people. The Arabs can scarcely be distinguished as they make their way along the narrow mountain tracks; their clothes are just the same colour as these strata of rocks. A few paces, and as you watch them they are swallowed up in the mountain-side, while their houses are but portions of the rocks themselves.

The Italians took possession of Yeffren on March 27, 1913, after the battle of Assaba. They found the whole country in a terrible state of poverty and desolation, and it is wonderful to see how in so short a time they have gained the sympathy of the population. Working hand in hand with the Italian Resident and his staff are the native administrators, the Kaimakan or Arab Resident for the Kazà (department) of Yeffren, and four Mudirs or vice-Residents for the Muderias of Gelah, Kikla, and Eriaira, precisely the same system of administration which holds good in all the other parts of Tripolitania, and which produces excellent results. The region of Yeffren is divided into ten districts,¹ the Residency or Headquarters being

¹ Dahra, Tagerbost (south), Umsciussim, Gradiin, Maniin, Casbat (north), Scegarna, Gsir Bcasba, Tagma, and Tezemrait.

in Dahra. Here also is the old Turkish castle, transformed now into a modern fort and barracks. The population numbers about 14,000, two-thirds of whom are Arabs and one-third Berbers. There are also about 1,000 Jews, in whose hands is almost all the commerce of the place.

The new Tribunal for the administration in the future, which is just coming into function, will consist of the Commissioner, the Resident, and four other judges, all Italians, for the Italian population, while for the native population two Italians and two natives.

There is a school for the Arab children, but the Italian schoolmaster will arrive later on, as, Yeffren being still in the making, so much has been done and so much still remains to do. The Italians have undertaken a Herculean task in the cleaning out of these Augean stables. Nothing could make one realize this more keenly than a visit such as we have just paid to this outpost of Yeffren, now being set on its feet in the path of civilization and advancement, after centuries of neglect and oppression. To know with what zeal, courage, and enthusiasm this work is being carried on must arouse in us English as a nation the greatest sympathy and admiration, for is it not work that we have set ourselves to do wherever our flag has been planted? An officer told me that one day when he was standing talking to an Arab on the slope of the hill which faces the

great ocean of plain and desert the Arab turned to gaze out on the vast silent space. Then he said "This is our sea." After a long pause he added, "This is our Destiny."

The most romantic part of Yeffren is Tagerbost, where there are the ruins of an old Roman castle, which served in those days as a storehouse also. The walls are divided into small compartments, like a beehive, in which each man stored his possessions. The castle in Assaba is of similar construction. The mosque of Yeffren is of modern Turkish construction, built about seventy years ago. I visited the house of the Arab interpreter attached to the Residency. He was an officer in the Turkish army but gave himself up to the Italians at the time of the taking of Yeffren. He speaks Italian fluently and is a very modern type of Arab. His wife, a pretty girl of about twenty years, makes me excellent Turkish coffee and seems much pleased at my visit.

After lunch we all go out on the terrace overlooking the Market Place, which is crowded with Arabs as it was on market-day. It is most amusing to see their intense curiosity about myself, the first European woman they have ever seen. They crowd close up to the wall of the terrace, gazing at me in a steady, fixed attention which is slightly embarrassing. Later on we go down among them to take some snapshots amid much interest and friendly conversation.

A drive in the cammion to Roumia occupies part of the morning. It is a beautiful oasis, about ten miles from Yeffren, along the continuation of the excellent road towards Nalut, lately made by the Italians, which winds along the side of the mountain. The valley on the right is full of various kinds of palm-trees, which form a most picturesque foreground to the rugged mountains behind. In Roumia is a wonderful natural spring which provides the water supply for the whole of Yeffren. The Turks started constructing an aqueduct from the spring to Yeffren, but did not get sufficient pressure, so the Italians will build it afresh. At present the water is transferred every day by means of mule-carts laden with barrels of the water, which is excellent.

Getting out of the cammion, we climb downwards into the valley of the oasis and come upon a charmingly picturesque scene: Rebecca at the well! A little group of Jewesses washing clothes in the stream, dressed in blue and purple *barracans*, framed in by the palms and verdure. They greet us in the most friendly fashion but object to being photographed, though finally submitting when told that the picture is for *me*. There are plenty of olive-trees here, and much of the land is cultivated; but the village is in a state of romantic dilapidation, at least half the houses being in ruins, which does not, however, appear to trouble any one.

We leave Yeffren early in the afternoon, regretfully taking leave of our kind and courteous hosts, for the four-and-a-half-hours' drive back to Gharian, where we have arranged to stay the night again before proceeding homewards to Tripoli. It is a cold drive, but we speed along in splendid style, thanks to our first-class chauffeur. On the way we pass several very fine falcons,¹ on the look out for the partridges and other birds which abound on the plain in this part of the country. Large coveys of these birds rise up several times, and one of the officers with us succeeds, not without difficulty, in bagging one—a fine large specimen, in splendid condition.

As the sun sinks the air becomes bitterly cold, and we are not sorry to reach the cheery warmth of the Residency. The following morning sees us once more on our way towards Azizia, where we lunch, afterwards taking the train to Tripoli, which we reach at 6 p.m. in a glory of sunset—a fitting closing to an expedition which has been filled from beginning to end with the greatest interest, together with all the pleasure and zest of novelty.



PANORAMA OF YEFFREN.



WITH OUR HOSTS AT YEFFREN.

**THE
BERBERS**

CHAPTER XXIII

THE BERBERS

Short history of the Berbers—Origin of the name—Question of religion—Vandal and Byzantine epochs—First Arab expeditions—Conversion of the Berbers to Mohammedanism—Berber tribes—Dialect—Character—Berbers in the vicinity of Yeffren—Colouring—Family life—Curious custom of married life—Domestic position of the woman—Hospitality and etiquette—Dress—The mosque and the "*tajmat*"—Bachelors' quarters—The Touaregs—Manners and customs of this tribe—Origin of the word "Touareg."

THE country comprised between the western frontier of Tripolitania and Egypt, in spite of its vast extent, has only a comparatively restricted area of the Berber language. This ancient tongue of North Africa is to be met with in widely scattered points in this province. But we know from Egyptian documents that from the fourteenth century B.C. the Libians, consisting of the aboriginal population of North Africa, later on designated as Berbers, had a civilization and industries. They had their hereditary kings and had concluded alliances with the peoples of the islands off the coast of North Africa. The Arab writers were

the first to employ the name of Berbers.¹ Some historians find the derivation of the word in the Latin "Barbari," but it more probably springs from "Brabra," an aboriginal race from the basin of the Nile. In fact, the "Brabra" were the first inhabitants of North Africa whom the Arabs encountered in their invasion of the country.

Herodotus gives a description of the Libians which tallies exactly with the appearance of the Berber tribes to-day, and a certain number of their customs described by Herodotus are still common among the Berbers.

In the ninth century B.C. the Canaanites established themselves in Tripolitania, founding Oea, Lepta, and Sabrata. Following them, the inhabitants of Tyre took possession of the coast in the eighth century. The latter founded Carthage, which afterwards became the capital of the Roman Empire in Africa.

At the end of the third century B.C. the Berber kingdom of Numidia appeared in history, and for a long period checked the power of Carthage and Rome. Every one will remember the names of Massinissa and Yugurtha. The Numidians, like their descendants the Kabyles (Berber tribes) to-day, were a pastoral and agricultural people, in times of peace, though possessing military

¹ Vide Victor Piquet, *Les Civilisations de l'Afrique du Nord*, 1909. Paris : Armand Colin.

qualities of the first order. And that holds good now, for the Kabyles to-day are always ready to fight, and gave the French a good deal of trouble in Algeria. After the death of Yuba, the last King of Numidia, in the first century B.C., Numidia became a Roman province. From the fourth century A.D. the Roman civilization disappeared little by little from Northern Africa, and the natural life of the natives of the country reappeared. It is at this period that there is so much uncertainty as to the religion adopted by the Berber tribes. According to some writers, many tribes professed Christianity, but schismatic forms of Christianity. Foremost amongst these was the heresy of the Donatists, followers of a Bishop of Aurès (Algeria) named Donat. This soon took the form of a political movement against the Romans. At the same period the schism of Arius appeared in Syrenaica. In A.D. 368 a Berber chief named Ghildon placed himself at the head of 70,000 warriors, giving the last blow to the Roman rule. Now at length Africa was given a period of rest. The tribes took up their pastoral life once more, resuming their ancient divisions. But their religion remained unchanged.

In A.D. 415 the Vandals under Genseric appeared in North Africa, and were very well received by the natives. Their rule lasted until the sixth

century, when the Byzantine occupation took place, amidst terrible internal struggles. In the seventh century the natives had recovered their independence everywhere. Ibn Khaldoun, an Arab historian, says: "The Berbers in the country, strong in their numbers and resources, obeyed their kings, chiefs, and emirs. They lived there, sheltered from the attacks to which the tyranny of the Romans and Franks would have made them submit." It was at this moment, at the opening of the seventh century A.D., that Mohammed began to prophesy. After his death his father-in-law, Abou Bekr, succeeded him, took the title of Khalif, and commenced the first Arab expeditions, political and religious at the same time. These continued until the eleventh century A.D. The religious fervour of the Arab conquerors succeeded in converting the entire population to Mohammedanism, and to this day the Berbers profess the Mussulman religion. But they do not follow exactly the orthodox "Malekite" rite which reigns over almost the whole of Northern Africa (for the "Hanefite" rite was introduced into Tripolitania by the Turks). They show the same tendency of religious independence as in the time of Arius; as an officer in Yeffren remarked to me, "They are the Protestants of Islamism." They are sometimes accused of being "unfaithful followers of the Prophet." One may say rather that they are not

fanatic. As Anthony Wilkin¹ relates: "Of the latter people [Arabs] I have met few with whom it was possible—at least, in their own country—to enter into a discussion of religious matters; but here again is a difference between them and the Berbers, for, with the occasional exception of a marabout, we often found the latter willing to argue points of doctrine in a friendly spirit."

This overwhelming conquest of the Berbers by the Arabs and their no less complete conversion to Islam can only be explained by the lack of unity which reigned in Northern Africa during the self-rule of the Berber tribes after the Roman epoch.

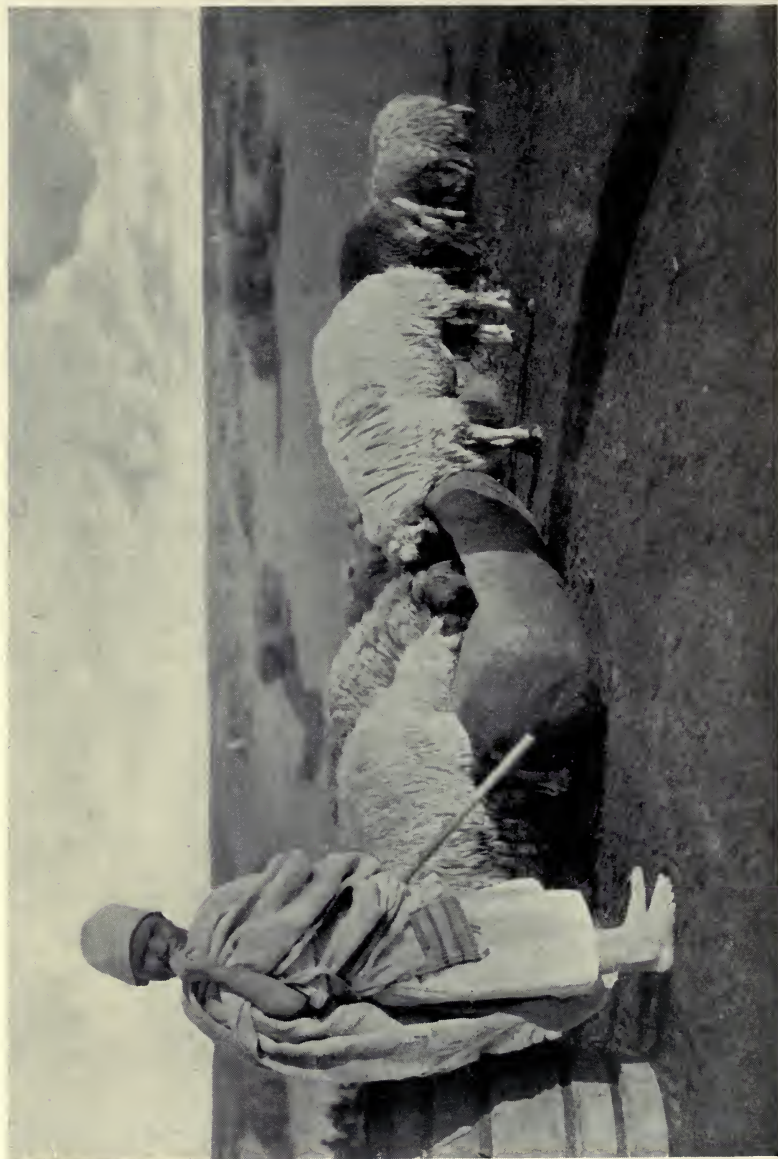
However, at the beginning of the eighth century A.D. the population complained bitterly of the despotic rule of the Arabs, who, according to the chroniclers, "take the daughters of the Berbers to people the harems of Syria." Incessant insurrections took place, but these were always crushed by the Arabs.

The name of Berbers is given in general to all the aboriginal inhabitants of Northern Africa who are not Arabs. The Kabyles of Djurdjura and of Cherchell, the Chawias of Aurès in Algeria, the Mzabites and the Oued Zenatias of the oases of the Sahara, the Touaregs of the desert, the Riffians of Morocco, the Kroumirs of Tunisia, and the

¹ *Among the Berbers of Algeria*, by Anthony Wilkin. Fisher Unwin, 1900.

Berbers of Tripolitania all belong to the Berber race, and there are but small differences in the dialects of the various tribes. Professor Newman declares that the original material of the Berber language is not Shemitic, "that the great mass of the words is thoroughly peculiar." Gräberg de Hemso, who was Consul for Sweden and Norway in Tripoli in 1831, was among the first to write concerning the Berber dialect of Ghadames on the Tripolitanian frontier.¹ James Richardson brought back with him from his first voyage in the Sahara a translation of the same dialect, the third chapter of the evangelist St. Matthew and the vocabularies of the same origin. These were translated by a *taleb* (schoolmaster) into Arab characters, without any attempt at vocalization. Motylinski gives an interesting study of the Berber dialect. He visited Touggourt and El Oued, where he obtained direct information from natives conversant with the dialect of Ghadames. The Berbers are very unlike the Arabs in character, and I may say here that there is little love lost between the two peoples. They are also very different from them in features, colouring, and the way in which they walk. I was told by a man who has lived among them for some years that the Berbers are much more energetic and hard-working, and

¹ Motylinski, *Grammaire, dialogues et dictionnaire Touareg*. Alger, 1908.



A PASTORAL SCENE—BERBER BOY.

more lively than the Arabs. They are also very courageous, but hot-tempered and revengeful. Curiosity is a marked feature of their character ; they invariably want to find out about everything they see. But their conscience is somewhat elastic, and they are exceedingly superstitious. They are a mountain race, and build their villages as much as possible on the rocky heights.

I was told by the officer commanding at Misdah, some sixty miles west of Yeffren, in the Gebel district of Tripolitania, that the place contained many Berber inhabitants. I saw numbers of Berber types in the crowds of Arabs at Yeffren, and had we been able to penetrate as far as Nalut, eighty miles west of Yeffren, we should have been in the home of the Berbers, who form the greater part of the population. All the ruins of old castles which we saw *en route* between Gharian and Yeffren, dominating the plateaux of rocks, are ancient Berber fortresses.

The question as to the prevailing fairness of the Berber colouring has been much discussed, and there is a great deal of conflicting evidence. I was told on good authority that the Berbers to be met with in the vicinity of Misdah, Yeffren, and Nalut are distinctly fair in colouring. Those I saw in Yeffren were light-skinned, with fair or brown hair, a distinct contrast to the Arabs ; but the proportion of fair Berbers varies in the

different tribes. Herodotus gives a description of the Libians, which is borne out by several writers to-day when describing the Berbers. He says, "They are white-skinned, with fair hair and blue eyes."

The Berbers differ from the Arabs in many of the customs of their family life. The head of the house rules his wife and his younger brothers. Monogamy prevails, and the husband has complete authority over his wife, whom he buys. There is one very curious feature about the married life of the Berber which might perhaps be introduced with success into some European households. The young Berber wife is always chaperoned by her mother or her mother-in-law, or some other aged female relative (*tamrhartis*), who looks after her and acts as intermediary between her and her husband, for the couple *never speak directly to each other*. This surveillance lasts during the first period of marriage, while the wife is quite young. She serves her husband at table, and does not eat until he has finished. He can repudiate her if he chooses to do so, without ceremony, and can forbid her remarriage, which means a terrible isolation for the woman. On the other hand, if she is unjustly treated by her husband she can rebel and leave him to live with her relations where he cannot molest her. The eldest son takes command of the household in the absence of his

father. *Kous-kous* forms an important item of food, with flat, large cakes of barley bread and dried figs. The Berbers are a most hospitable people, and when they invite their friends to a meal, the meat in the *kous-kous* is of the best—in fact, all is served regardless of expense. The master of the house takes the first spoonful, saying “*Bismillah!*” after which the most complete silence reigns during the whole of the repast. It is not etiquette to cease eating without ceremony. If the host notices that one of his guests has put down his spoon he begs that he will continue to eat. The guest must then take a few more spoonfuls, after which he may declare himself satisfied and is left in peace. The same ceremony takes place with each guest in turn.

The master must finish eating last of all ; then he spreads his hands over the table and says a short prayer—a “grace” in fact, in which he is joined by all the rest. They are a sober race, much more so than the Arabs. The latter, as I have mentioned in a preceding chapter, push their affection for *leghbi* much farther than is permitted by the law of the Koran, but the Berbers content themselves ordinarily with water. The women’s work consists chiefly in the occupation of water-carrying. They meet at the nearest well or fountain in picturesque groups, returning home with the water in great jars or petrol-tins, sometimes in rough skin bags. They prepare the *kous-kous*, and weave cloth or cotton

garments, and do all the washing. The dress of both men and women hardly differs at all from that of the Arabs. As far as I saw in Tripolitania it was exactly the same, but I was told that among the Kabyle Berbers in Algeria the men sometimes wear, in addition to the *Gaudoura* and the *burnous*, short, full white trousers. The Berber women in Tripolitania, in addition to the usual *haik*, or chemise, and the *barracan*, wear a sort of cloak of cotton or wool, which covers the back and shoulders, while another such covering clothes them in front.

In every Berber village there is a *Djema*, or mosque, which serves also as a school, following the Arab custom. Here the children are taught by the *taleb* to read the Koran, while the grown-ups, that is to say every adult capable of shouldering a gun, have a meeting-place called the *tajmat*, where they smoke, drink coffee, and discuss their affairs.

According to Berber custom the unmarried men must not sleep at home. They have their quarters in the village café if there is one, if not, in a house which is put aside for them.

Of all the Berber tribes the Touaregs are the most warlike and the most difficult to subdue. I was anxious to know whether any wanderers from the heart of the Sahara, the real home of the Touaregs, ever came to visit Tripoli, and was told that before the Italian occupation in 1911

they *did* occasionally come in to trade, but that since then none had been seen.

There are several denominations of the tribe, the three most important being the Hoggar Touaregs, from all accounts the most dangerous of all, the Asgars, and the Touaregs of the Adrharh. Their chiefs do not command the tribes in direct descent ; that is to say, when a chief at the head of a tribe dies, his sister's son takes his place, instead of his own son, as, following a custom handed down by their ancestors, the sister's son ranks before the son and grandson. The men veil their faces, leaving their eyes exposed, hence the name the "masked Touaregs" with which one is familiar. In eating, they convey the food to their mouths with their hands under the veil, *never* eating unveiled when with strangers, and rarely even when alone with their families. In their left hand they carry a sort of dagger or sharp knife, and some wear a steel bracelet above the right elbow. This clasps the arm firmly, and is intended to give force to the blow of the sword when fighting. They are extraordinarily superstitious, and the most wonderful legends are common amongst them relating to the genii of the mountains. Sometimes, when travelling together on their camels, one of them will vanish, climbing the mountain on his beast, and leaving the others to search in vain for him. When he returns and is questioned by his comrades,

his invariable answer is that he has been to see the genii, who received him kindly and invited him to stay with them. After such an interview he is treated with the greatest respect by the rest of the tribe. There is a legend regarding the origin of the word "Touareg" which is so quaint and characteristic that it is worth while relating. The story goes that once upon a time there was a man named Diab el Hellali, who was with his tribe near Tunis. He quarrelled with the Caliph, and as the tribe was in danger he said to them, "Keep the camels and preserve the safety of the tribe." For the quarrel was about some camels. But the others would not listen to him, so he took forty men and departed with them on their camels. But Diab had a mare which slaked her thirst with the milk of a certain camel. A demon of the genii cast his spells upon the camel, and she ceased to give any more milk. The fact was reported to Diab, who loved his mare more than all in the world, so he set out to search for the genie, going from one place to another.

One day, passing near a village, he saw at the gate a platter full of *kous-kous* and a young girl standing by it. This was the daily sacrifice offered by the village to the genie. Diab was pondering over this situation when suddenly he heard a noise as of a mighty tempest, and saw the genie advancing towards him. With one formidable blow Diab slew him, whereupon the village, in delight at the

deliverance, offered him as a reward anything he liked to ask. His reply was, "Give me forty young maidens." They were brought to him, and he took them and gave them to his companions in marriage. For some months all went well, then, the rest of the tribe having come to look for Diab and his men, the latter departed with them, leaving the women alone. The children born after the desertion were named by the mothers *Touarek*, which means "forsaken," because the fathers had left them to their fate.



A WELL IN THE DESERT.

BERBER CUSTOMS

CHAPTER XXIV

BERBER CUSTOMS

Customs—Rejoicings at birth of a son—Daughters of no account—Circumcision—Amusing practices—Education rather primitive—*Fiançailles* of the girls—Old maids at ten years of age—Spells to obtain a husband—Marriage preliminaries—The “dot”—Ceremonies before marriage-day—The wedding-day—Bride hides herself—Pick-a-back home—The chase of the bride in Tripolitania—A novel way of preparing the *kous-kous*—Berber funerals—Preliminaries—The amulet and the Angel of Death—Condolences—The forty days and their explanation.

THE Berber customs at their festivals of rejoicing, as also those at their times of mourning, show many differences when compared with those of the Arabs. One thing, at any rate, they have in common with all the Mohammedan nations—and that is, their joy at the birth of a son. With them, as with all good Mussulmans, daughters are of no account (until the question of the “dot” appears upon the scene).

Among the Berbers the birth of a boy is generally announced by the firing of guns. Friends and relations come to congratulate the father and mother, bringing presents with them

of mutton, eggs, chickens, honey, and so on. They make it a point of honour to fire off more guns both on arrival and when they leave the house. But if a girl is born no signs of joy are shown. On the contrary, the friends and relations are inclined to jeer somewhat at the luckless parents, while on all sides the words "Only a girl!" are repeated. Certain gifts are presented, nevertheless, and his friends wish the father "*terba tseghirt*" ("May her dot be a large one!") After the birth of a son there is quite a ceremony to be gone through during the days following the birthday. On the third day the child is named, after the last deceased male member of the family.

On the fifth day, he whom the rest of the household consider as the most capable and the cleverest in the family is invited to place his finger in the child's mouth. By this action he expresses the wish that the boy may one day resemble him. On the seventh day a sheep is killed, all relations and friends being invited to the feast. A great day of rejoicing takes place when the baby boy is able to sit upright. He is promptly seated in a great dish of *kous-kous* while grain is poured upon his head, as a sign of the future prosperity which all hope will be his. Finally, when the child is carried out of doors for the first time the neighbours make a

point of offering him some presents. I presume this is omitted if the baby is a girl.

Circumcision among the Berbers takes place at a much earlier age than among the Arabs, but as with them, it is made an occasion for great rejoicings. An important feast is given on the day, to all the relations and friends, and the women raise their shrill cries of joy at this, as indeed at all other festivals. At the end of the feast each guest makes an offering of money for the musicians, the man who receives the gifts in his hands calling out in a loud voice the amount received from each person. This would seem to be a very practical way of obtaining a sufficient sum.

The Berbers have a quaint custom intended to preserve the boy from diseased glands. When he is about four or five years old some sheep's kidneys are purchased at the market. After these have been cut up into seven pieces, his grandfather or one of his uncles holds out his foot to the child, saying at the same time, "Put it there, dog!" The boy places a morsel of the kidney on the foot held out to him, whereupon the man says, "Take it, dog!" This performance is gone through with each of the seven pieces in succession. The Berbers give their sons a very free hand in the matter of upbringing and education. Far from punishing them, they encourage them

to follow their instincts; in fact, even to-day, in some tribes, a young Berber is not considered as an adult until he has distinguished himself by carrying off a horse or some sheep without being detected in the act. Not till then is he judged capable of shouldering his gun and joining the *tajmat*.

Of course the father only occupies himself with the education (!) of his son, taking absolutely no interest in the upbringing of his daughter—this is left entirely to the mother. She is taught to weave, to cook the inevitable *kous-kous*, and to carry water from the well. At the age of eight or ten years her parents begin to consider the question of finding a suitable husband for her. With these tribes, as with the Arabs, it is a terrible disgrace for a girl to go unasked in marriage. The Berber girl is often “engaged” when a mere baby, certainly before she is ten years old, and is married at the age of twelve. She considers herself and is looked upon by all as an “old maid” if not “fiancée” before the age of ten.

Her mother, quite as concerned about the matter as the girl, goes to see a marabout, who will probably prescribe some mysterious ceremony in which these superstitious people have full belief. The very favourite superstition is as follows. The girl's mother takes in her hands eggs, beans and



WASHING-DAY IN THE DESERT—A BERBER TYPE.

other vegetables, and throws them in the track of the footsteps of him whom she desires for her son-in-law.

Sometimes the girl herself will take an egg which has been blessed by a marabout, and throw it down on the spot where the longed-for husband will pass. At any rate, by one means or another, even the very plainest of the young Berber girls succeed eventually in obtaining a husband, who will in all probability divorce her as soon as possible. To that she is absolutely indifferent—at least the shame of never having been asked in marriage is wiped out!

The Berbers have entirely different customs at their marriage festivals from those in use at Arab weddings. The preliminaries differ considerably also. The choice of a bride is an important step which occupies the attention of the mother of the future bridegroom. As soon as his marriage has been decided on, she looks round among her acquaintances and friends to find a daughter-in-law who will suit *her* as well as her son. She adroitly questions her neighbours as to the character of the young girl whom she has mentally chosen already as her future daughter-in-law. She tries to find out her tastes, and to ascertain that she has no hereditary taint or blemish. Then she informs her husband, who, with one of his friends, goes to pay a visit to the girl's father, for the Berber girls are

not kept secluded as are the Arab women and girls, and he will be able to judge for himself whether all is as his wife has reported. If she has the good fortune to please him, he enters into negotiations with her father as to the amount of the "dot" to be remitted to the latter. Then the day of the *miaghel*, or settlement, is fixed upon—that is to say, when the purchase of the girl will be publicly arranged, and the amount of the "dot" definitely settled, a thoroughly business-like affair. On that day the bridegroom's father goes with a marabout to the house of the fiancée, where immediately on his arrival he partakes of a meal consisting of an omelette or a *kous-kous*. After this is finished the marabout sets to work to try and reduce the price of the "dot" as much as possible, that being the sole reason for his presence at the business interview. When all is finally settled he pronounces the marriage established by Allah, and gives the benediction. After that the relations embrace each other while the father of the bridegroom offers presents to the future bride—a silk handkerchief, a long roll of material, and a *barracan*.

Every one then goes home, firing guns as a mark of joy. After the lapse of a certain time the fiancé's father goes to the house of the fiancée to pay the much-bargained "dot." This visit is always made at night. The marabout who accom-

panies him makes another and final effort to reduce the sum. When the money has at last been handed over, with the presents which always accompany it, consisting of sheep, silk handkerchiefs, butter, and so on, the benediction is once more pronounced and all return home. Some days later the mother of the fiancé, accompanied by other women, brings the trousseau to her future daughter-in-law. She also takes with her a child or a woman who is to represent the fiancé at the feast, for the bridegroom must not see his bride before the actual marriage-day. As soon as they arrive the women friends and relations hasten to examine the trousseau, and then follows the ceremony of crushing the henna, which plays as large a part in the ceremony as it does in the marriage feasts of the Arabs. The fiancée and the representative of the fiancé take hold of the metal stem which is used to crush the henna and together pulverize the leaves in the mortar. At the same time a little water is poured into the mixture, the latter representing the sweetness, just as the pestle represents the strength, of a household. The henna is then applied to one hand of the fiancé and to the hands and feet of the fiancée. During the whole time the musicians have been making as much noise as possible, and the women keep up a perpetual "lulululu." A feast follows, and when that is finished the music begins again, continuing far into the night.

On the wedding-day the bride goes to hide herself in the house of one of her relations or friends. The musicians hunt for her in every direction; in fact, there are those who say that this flight of the fiancée has no other aim than that of prolonging the pleasure of the music in the village where she is in hiding. If she is found at some distance from her home, she makes the return journey mounted on a mule, but should the hiding-place be close by she mounts pick-a-back on a woman and comes home in this quaint fashion. The toilette finished, the bride mounts her mule, which will be led by her mother, who has already fastened the girdle round the neck of the animal. This will serve as bridle, and she expects the father of the bridegroom to pay her the price of the girdle. In this fashion the bride is led to the house of the bridegroom, preceded by musicians and accompanied by the songs of the women. Guns are fired all along the road so that nothing shall be lacking in the proceedings. When the cortège has arrived at the fiancé's house, he, or one of his relations, meets the bride on the threshold or on the roof of the house and throws a little handful of earth over her. In some tribes the fiancé administers a blow with his fist to the bride as she enters the door of the house, to prove the superiority of man, or, according to another explanation, to destroy the power of the spell which the bride's mother has obtained

from the marabout, and by means of which the newly married wife will be able to rule her husband. This charm consists in a piece of paper contained in an amulet, which the wife will adroitly slip under the carpet or matting on the first night of the marriage. Before descending from the mule the fiancée kisses the lintel of the door as a sign of her affection for the house which will henceforth be her home. As soon as she has set her foot on the ground her friends hasten to place as many children on the mule as can find a place, to ensure her a numerous family. On her entrance into the house she is presented with a plough, to which is fastened a stick. This she moves backwards and forwards for some seconds to bring an abundance of good harvests for her household. The wedding feast now takes place, followed by a gift of money, which the guests offer to the newly married couple. The dance then commences, performed in some of the tribes by the men and women, in others only by the men. A curious custom, which was told me by an Italian officer who has lived for some time among the Berber tribes in Tripolitania, is that of the chasing of the bride by the bridegroom. The former, mounted on a swift camel, is pursued by the fiancé, who, accompanied by his friends, all mounted on good horses, must capture her by being the first to touch the fair prize with his hand.

The day after the wedding a *kous-kous* is prepared in a distinctly original manner. For it is cooked in the water which the bride has used for her bath. This dish is placed on a *haik* and carried first to the bride, after which the rest of the company are served. Afterwards the bride is mounted on a mule and conducted to the tomb of a marabout, around which she has to ride seven times. (In some tribes the bride herself has to prepare the *kous-kous*, which is to bring good luck to the house.) After her return home her hair is dressed, the girdle is fastened round her, and the members of her family, with those of her husband, sit down to a meal of goat's flesh. The marabout joins in the feast, and afterwards gives some good advice to the young couple as to their future life together. The honeymoon lasts for seven days, during which time the young wife does no work, and on the seventh day she and her husband visit her parents, taking them presents.

There is more religious ceremony observed at Berber funerals than at those of the Arabs. On the night before the burial all the marabouts of the country are invited to pass the night near the body of the deceased, while reciting verses from the Koran. At the same time they burn incense, pouring a little water, brought from the sacred well at Mecca, over the corpse, which is afterwards washed and

dressed in a *haïk* or a long piece of cloth called *hambel* and carried in procession to the cemetery to the chanting of the formula "*Allah ak'bar!*" ("God is great!") On arrival at the cemetery the marabout recites the prayer for the dead, which is repeated by all present. The Berbers believe that if there are more than forty persons to repeat this prayer the soul of the deceased passes straight-way into heaven. During this time two graves have been dug, one larger than the other, and it is in the latter that the body is placed, lying on the right side, the face turned towards the east. The marabout places an amulet on the breast of the deceased, destined to reply in his name to Azraïen (the Angel of Death), who will ask him, "Who is thy God?" If the dead man, taken by surprise, replies, "Thou art my God," Azraïen strikes him with his staff. If, however, he replies, "Oh, my God is he who has created thee and me!" the Angel leaves him in peace.

According to the Berbers, the good men after death find a great light in the grave, but the wicked are wrapped in gloom until the day of the Last Judgment.

After the funeral the relatives place themselves in a line near the grave (a custom to which I have drawn attention in my chapter on Arab Funerals), while their friends condole with them, saying, "May the blessing of God be on your heads."

If it be a son who is dead, they say, "May God give you an honest son"; if a daughter, the formula changes to "May God give you another daughter." Meanwhile the grave-diggers have covered the smaller grave (which is underneath the larger) with stones, and completely filled the larger one, placing above it two stones, one at the head and one at the feet if the deceased is a man, three stones, one at each extremity and one in the middle, if it is a woman. Offerings of food are given to the poor on the evening of the funeral and again on the Thursday following, while several dishes of *kous-kous* are taken to the mosque on the fortieth day after the funeral. On this day also clay is placed on the grave so as to close it completely. The explanation given by the Berbers is that the Angel of Death visits the deceased in his grave during forty days. If he is a good man Azraïen does him no harm, but if he is evil the angel beats him every day, and finishes by destroying him utterly on the fortieth day.

(Much of this information has been obtained from a brochure, *Mœurs et coutumes Kabyles*, the Preface of which is signed by Jules Maistre.)

BERBER

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CHAPTER XXV

BERBER FOLKLORE

The jackal and the hare—Black hen to cure headaches—Superstition of the tooth—"Faith cures"—The Kâhina—Dervishes—The Berber fakirs—Amulets—The porcupine's foot—The "evil eye"—Water remedy against the "evil eye"—Guardian angels—Folklore—Resemblance to the German fairy stories—The Berber and the falcon—Indian origin of some legends—Arabic influence—"The Magic Horse"—Kabyle story of the pearl necklace—Conclusion.

AMONG the numerous superstitions of the Berbers are many which bear a close resemblance to or are identical with those of the Arabs and other Mohammedan nations. For instance, to meet a jackal is held to be a sign of good luck, as in some parts of India. But should a hare cross your path in the morning you will inevitably hear bad news, or meet with some evil chance. The same thing holds good in the case of the raven. I believe both these superstitions are also common in England; at any rate, I can remember as a child hearing of them from the country-folk. The Kabyles and the Arabs, however, have a saying which they repeat to the intending traveller:

"Please God that you meet only the jackal in the morning and the hare in the evening." A common saying among them is that if a cock crows on the threshold, guests will arrive.

As for the superstitions regarding illness, they are innumerable, and all are put down to the Djinns, or evil genii. If a Berber suffers from repeated headaches, he buys a black hen at the market. The bird is driven into the house three days in succession, killed on the fourth day, and eaten by the sick man, who afterwards carries the bones of the fowl to the cemetery and places them on the grave of a stranger. They have another quaint superstition regarding the extraction of the first tooth. It must be thrown on to the top of the house, as that will bring money to the family. The marabout, who is also the doctor, plays a large part in the "cures." It is a favourite practice with the Berbers to take an egg to the saint, who writes on it some words from the Koran, after which the sufferer must eat the egg, shell and all, thus ensuring complete recovery from any illness. I suppose faith goes a long way. Another custom which much resembles those I have already described in my chapter on Arab Superstitions is also common among the Berbers. In a case of fever the marabout writes a verse of the Koran on a piece of paper and washes the ink off in a little water; this water must be drunk by the

patient. Or it may be that he writes the verse on the bottom of a cup, into which he afterwards pours a little water. In both cases the draught is supposed to effect a complete cure, and I have been assured that in five cases out of six the fever leaves the sufferer.

Almost every Berber tribe has its own sorcerer or sorcerers who is believed to be in communication with the demons and with the souls of the departed, and they are frequently consulted as to the wishes of the dead. The sorcerer informs the relatives as to what would be necessary or pleasant to the departed spirits, and these gifts are placed on the tombs.

A very interesting account of the sorceresses is given by Doutté¹ in his book on magic and religion in North Africa. They are especially renowned for the exploits of one of them who is generally called "the Kâhina," and who had immense power over all the Berber tribes of the Aurès towards the end of the first century of the Hegira; in fact, the Kâhina was looked upon as the "Queen of the Berbers." Hassan ben-Nomân, who was then Governor of North Africa, sent out an expedition to crush the power of the "Queen," but was defeated, though later on, towards the year A.D. 704, he was successful

¹ Doutté, *Magic et Religion dans l'Afrique du Nord*. Alger, 1909.

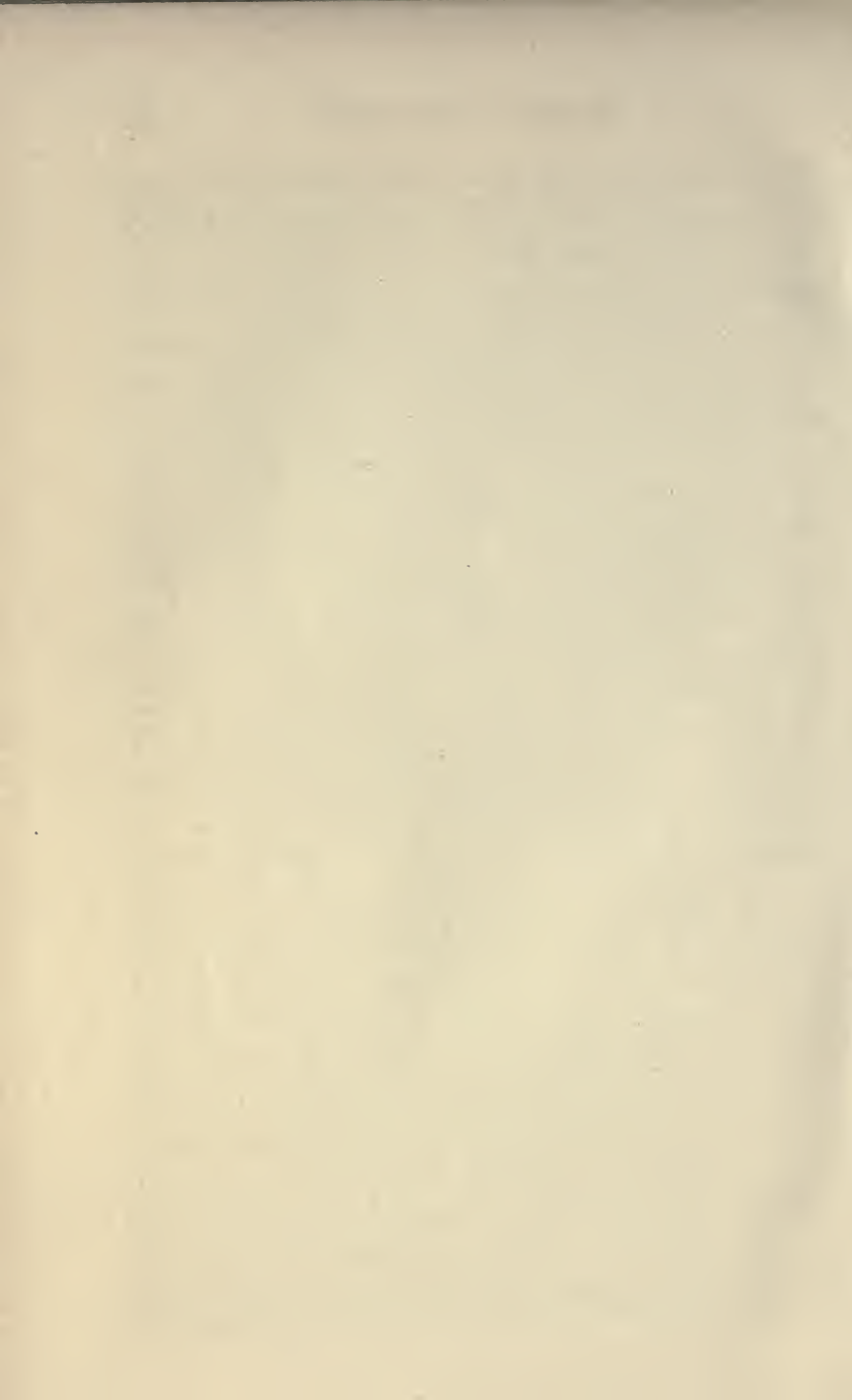
in another battle, and the Kâhina perished. The Berbers have a great respect for the dervishes who have the right to enter into any house and demand food, which is never refused. They are generally very dirty, their long, matted hair hanging about their shoulders, clad in a ragged *barracca* and carrying a stick, which is no doubt necessary to keep off the crowds of children who follow dervish and treat him with less respect than shown by their fathers!

The *Aboudalis* are the fakirs of the Berbers and live in caves or some other retired spot, supported by the alms of the natives. In common with all Mohammedans the Berber looks upon the fakir as a saint, saying when an *Aboudali* dies "The saint is dead." Every one goes to the funeral, and a marabout is speedily erected to his memory, a shrine which will be the object of many pilgrimages.

Like the Arabs, the Berbers have a great belief in the wearing of amulets, both as preventives and remedies for illness. I made many inquiries as to the form of the charms most generally worn and find that they almost invariably take the shape of little leather sachets containing a morsel of paper, on which is written the desired charm. Occasionally these little bags contain a bit of bone which has been blessed by the marabout. I was told of one charm common among the Berbers



PREPARING THE *KOUS-KOUS*.



women, which, as far as I know, is different from anything I have ever seen among the Arab women. This is a porcupine's foot mounted in silver, and worn as a charm during the time of pregnancy.

Against fever the Berbers carry an amulet hung round their necks, consisting of a piece of muslin in which has been sewn up some earth from a saint's tomb, and as a preventive against the bite of a scorpion they carry a live scorpion about with them in a little clay box. I have come across both these charms among the Arabs also, both in Tunisia and in Tripolitania.

The marabout is called in at once by the parents of a child who is supposed to be suffering from the effects of the "evil eye." He measures the infant's shoulders one after the other to see whether they are both of equal length. If this is the case, there has been no evil influence at work, but if not, the marabout at once writes some verses from the Koran on a sheet of paper, *in three places*, burns incense, and fumigates the child. Then he cuts the paper into three pieces, each one containing a portion of the writing, puts one piece into some water so that it shall dissolve, and the small patient is washed from head to foot in this water. After which operation the child must drink the water! This performance is gone through with the second piece of the amulet on the second day, on the day after with the third. When the patient has

swallowed all the water the effect of the "evil eye" is destroyed.

One belief of the Berbers which is a really charming idea is that each baby has its guardian angel. And these angels bring harm to whomsoever shall wake the infant sleeping in its cradle. Even the child's mother must wait till baby rouses from his slumbers.

The folklore of the Berbers is very difficult to collect, though when you do manage to find out some of the stories and legends which this race has handed down from generation to generation, they always prove to have been well worth the trouble of unearthing, and show a fund of dry humour which is original, and gives an insight into the character of the people. Several of the legends bear a strong resemblance to the German fairy stories written by Grimm. For instance, there is one about a cruel stepmother who ill-treats her stepchildren in order to favour her own offspring, and is afterwards well punished for her wickedness, which is almost identical with one of Grimm's stories.

As I have mentioned in the chapter on Yeffren, we saw many falcons as we passed through the mountain district. There is a legend about these birds which is worth while relating, as it is amusing, though not very polite to the fair sex.

Once upon a time a Berber, when out cutting *jujubia*, came across a falcon's nest, in which the bird was sitting. On approaching the spot he saw that the nest was inside a large earthenware cooking-pot, which presumably had been left behind by some Bedouins. Be that as it may, the bird was asleep inside, and Ali noticed the glitter of silver. On closer inspection he found that the falcon had made its nest on the top of a pile of silver pieces. Ali was a pious man, and believed in the power of Allah to give him what should be his, so he left the silver where it was, saying to himself, "If Allah has sent the bird so much money, He will send me more." So he went home. But when he related the history to his wife she was rather annoyed (as any woman would be). She said to him, "Oh, very well, then sit down and wait till money drops from the skies into your mouth." Ali, being a simple soul, took this literally, and sat down in a corner of his hut to wait till it should please Allah to send him silver pieces. He sat there all day, but no silver fell from the skies. However, Ali's faith remained unshaken. On the following day as he started out from home to go to his work, he noticed lying at his feet a large earthenware pot exactly like the one in which the falcon had made its nest. It lay as though some one had placed it there on purpose. But Ali saw in this only some evil work of the bad spirits, so

he passed on, saying, "Allah, who gave to the bird, will give to me also." When he returned home in the evening he told his wife about the pot, but she lost all patience, and said, "I do not believe your story. Men are all liars. If it is not a lie, show me the pot." Ali showed her where to go, and she found the pot where her husband had said it was. But when she looked inside, behold, it was full of scorpions! Wrapping it in her *barracan*, she carried it back to the house and, furious with rage, emptied the contents all over Ali. Judge of her surprise when as the scorpions fell, they were turned into pieces of silver! For Ali was a true believer. But he only said, "Allah is great! and women are fools." ¹

Many of the stories came first from India, but have been transformed by the Berber traditions. Then there is much Arabic influence also, of the "Thousand and One Nights" style. "The Magic Horse," an old Berber legend, is one of these, strongly resembling a well-known tale in that book, but as it is a good legend and has many points which differ from the Arab version, I give it, as follows :—

Once upon a time there was a king who had a son as beautiful as the moon. One day he received

¹ A legend somewhat resembling this will be found in *Märchen der Berbern von Tamazratt*, by Dr. Hans Stumme. Leipzig, 1900.

a visit from a magician, who made him a present of an iron horse, in which he had constructed springs to enable it to mount to the sky. The king was very pleased with this present, and placed it in a pavilion. The king's son went at night so that his father should not see him, mounted the horse, moved the springs, and rose high in the air towards the heavens. Then, opening the springs, he descended into a town, on the palace of another king. It was night, but the young man found a pavilion still lighted, so he entered and saw a princess as beautiful as a star. She was frightened, but he spoke to her and said, "I am a man and not a genie." She gave him to eat and to drink, and when he had finished he said to her, "Come with me to my country." "I will go if you will marry me," she replied. "That I will promise you," said the prince. They mounted the horse, which carried them towards the sky. As the light became clearer the prince could see his father's town, so he descended in the garden, and leaving the young girl with the horse, he went to tell his father of his adventure. The king was much pleased, but while they were talking the magician, who knew what had been happening, went immediately to the spot where he found the horse and the girl. He mounted the horse and carried off the princess to give her to another king. When the prince and his father returned they

discovered the loss of the princess and the horse. Then the king sent messengers at once to search for the magician, and when he saw that the latter was not to be found, he said, "It is he who has done this thing." The prince wept bitterly, and waited in vain. One day he set out on horseback to search for the princess and the magician, and at last heard news of them in a far-off town. The king of this city wanted to marry the princess, but she refused, saying that she was possessed by the Djinns and was too ill. Nothing seemed to do her any good, but when the prince arrived and spoke to her she recognized him and asked him, "What of the promise you made me?" "That promise holds good to-day," he replied, and remained with her. When night fell she went to find the magic horse, which they mounted together, leaving the king. The prince and princess arrived safely in his father's town, were married and had two children, and at the death of his father the prince became king.¹

One of the Kabyle stories is very amusing. In it is told the history of a pearl necklace which is found by three women. As each wants it, they decide to take the treasure to a sorceress, and ask her advice, which is to the effect that she who

¹ René Basset, *Contes populaires berbères*, Paris, 1887; also *Fond Berbère*, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

can perform the most wonderful feat shall win the prize. The tale goes on to say how each of the women plans to play off a trick on her husband. One, who is married to a Turk "with a long beard," drugs her husband and dresses him in the uniform of a sentinel, bearded likewise, whom she also drugs by means of a dish of *kous-kous*. The negress who carries the drugged soldier to her mistress's house returns with the unconscious Turk on her back, leaving him in the soldier's place. When the sergeant finds the sentinel asleep, he is furious and kicks him till he awakes. The Turk is naturally bewildered at finding himself on duty as a sentinel and tries to explain. He only gets himself into more trouble, and, terrified at the threat of imprisonment, remains silent at his post. Meanwhile, the real soldier awakes to find himself in bed in a strange house. He is even more bewildered than the Turk, and tries to get out of bed to return to his post. But his (supposed) wife bids him go to sleep again and not worry her with his nonsense. Too drowsy to argue, he obeys; when he awakes the woman gives him some food, which is once more drugged. Then she sends the negress to her husband, still doing sentry, with a dish of food mixed with a narcotic. After eating it he falls asleep and is carried home by the negress, who returns with the soldier, whom she leaves at his post. His

surprise and bewilderment when he awakes to find himself once more a sentinel is only equalled by that of the Turk, who opens his eyes to find himself once more in his own bed. Neither of them can puzzle out the matter, so each concludes finally that all was a dream, and the woman hastens with her story to the sorceress, who, after she has heard the other women relate their attempts to gain the prize (their efforts are rather involved and much less amusing than the one I have told here), awards the necklace to the wife of the Turk.

As Ibn Khaldoun says, the Berbers relate such a quantity of stories, that if they should be written down, volumes could be filled with them. That is to say they tell them among themselves, but they are not over fond of repeating them to the stranger. I once asked an Arab in Kairouan why it was so difficult to find a story-teller who would tell us some of the tales they repeat to each other and he said, "Because we are afraid of being laughed at." Perhaps the Berbers have the same feeling.

**LAST
IMPRESSIONS**

CHAPTER XXVI

LAST IMPRESSIONS

The Market Place in the evening—The harbour—Goodbye to Tripoli—“*Mafeesh!*”

OUR last evening has arrived, and we stroll out after dinner to take a farewell of the town, and for the last time to visit the bread-market, that centre of the native life in Tripoli, always picturesque and attractive, no matter at what hour of the day or night. For here in the evening the Arabs, folded in their *barracans*, lie down to sleep under the stars. Here now, at nine o'clock, all is hushed and mysterious. The busy cammions have ceased their traffic, the camels are enjoying their well-earned rest, even the hard-worked donkeys are at peace. The dark blue sky is powdered thickly with stars, the air is still and balmy, the busy stalls are closed and silent—only here and there are groups of Arabs gathered round their fires in the open, chatting and drinking tea. One or two cafés are still open, and from the distance we hear again the

drone of the Arab love song, to which the silent figures are listening, the while they smoke the evening hookah.

Under the sheltering porticoes of the closed shops lie huddled in their *barracans* dim, ghostly forms deep in sleep—worn out after a hard day's work. Groups of white-clad figures pass us from time to time, but soon even these come to an end. One by one the men gathered round the fires pull their coverings over their heads and lie down to sleep, the fires flicker lower, the voice of the distant singer ceases, the murmuring gossip from the cafés dies down—the Market Place is asleep.

We pass homewards by the harbour, lying dark and motionless, asleep too. A myriad lights are reflected on the calm surface from the small craft anchored there. We wander down to the landing-stage beyond the Customs House and stand awhile to gaze at the town silhouetted clear and black against the sky, the high walls of the old castle, characteristic and sharply outlined, dominating all.

And we say goodbye to Tripoli, the city which we have learnt to love, and whose strange charm has stamped it indelibly on our memory. Our visit is over. "*Mafeesh!*"—"It is ended."



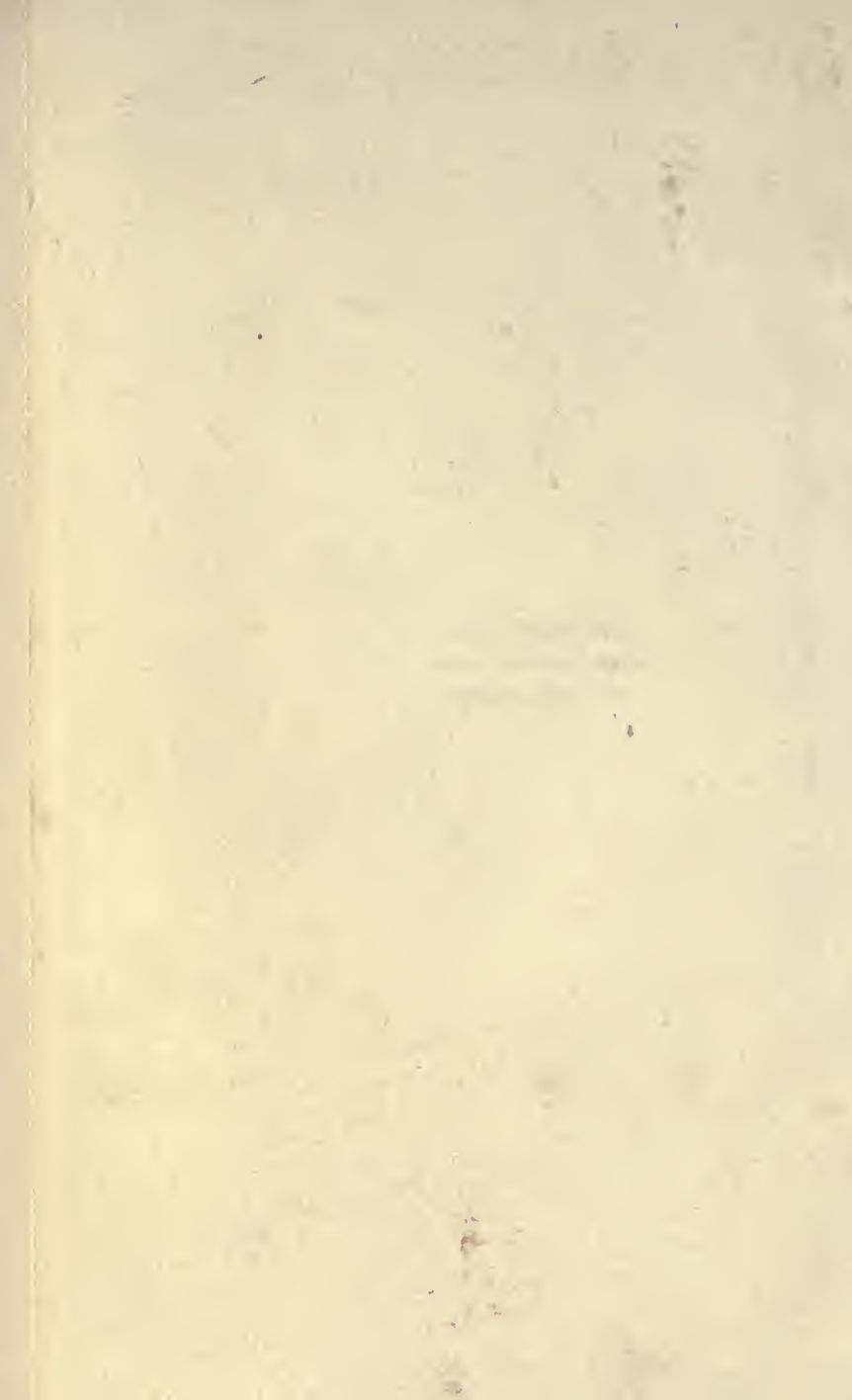
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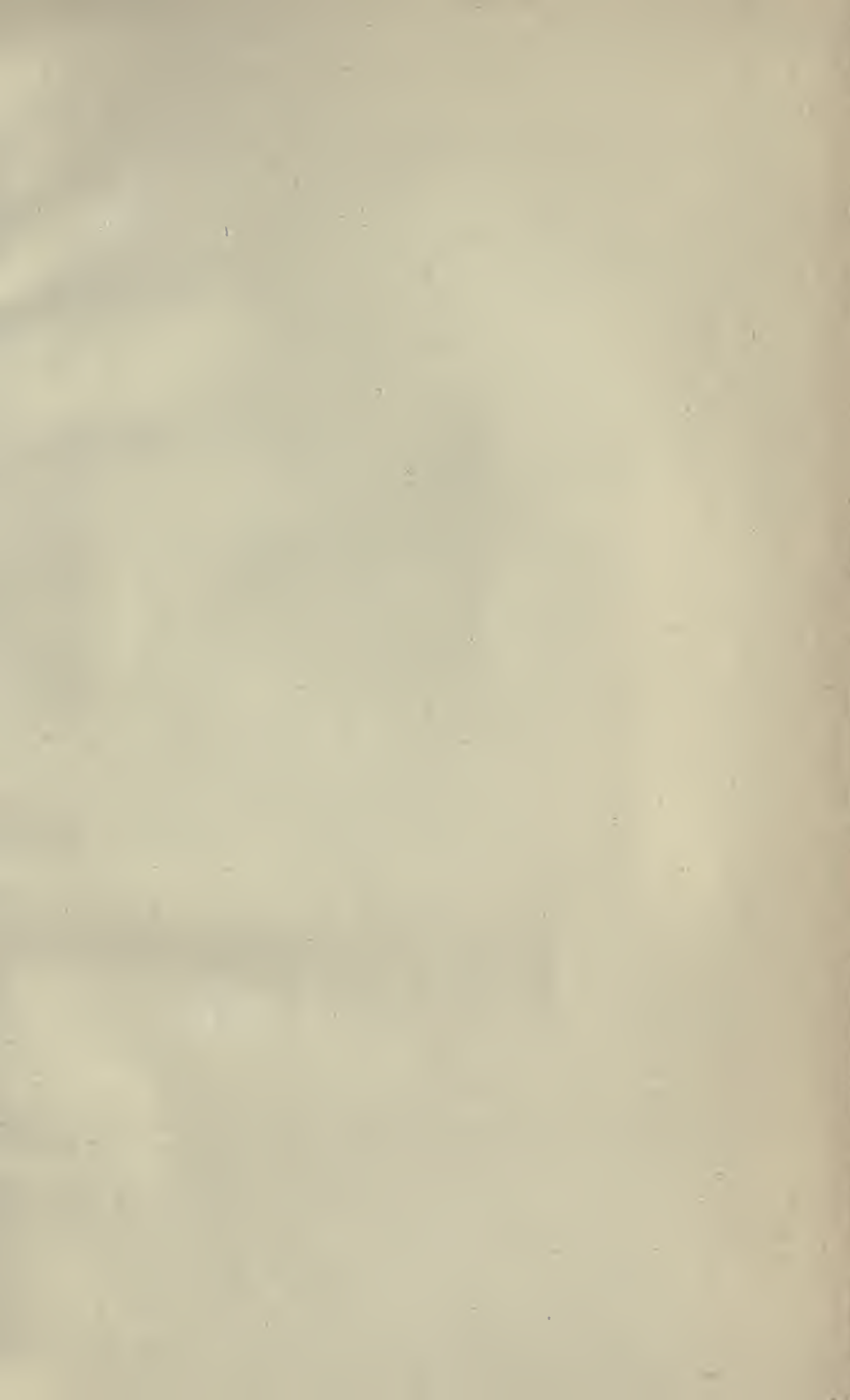
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